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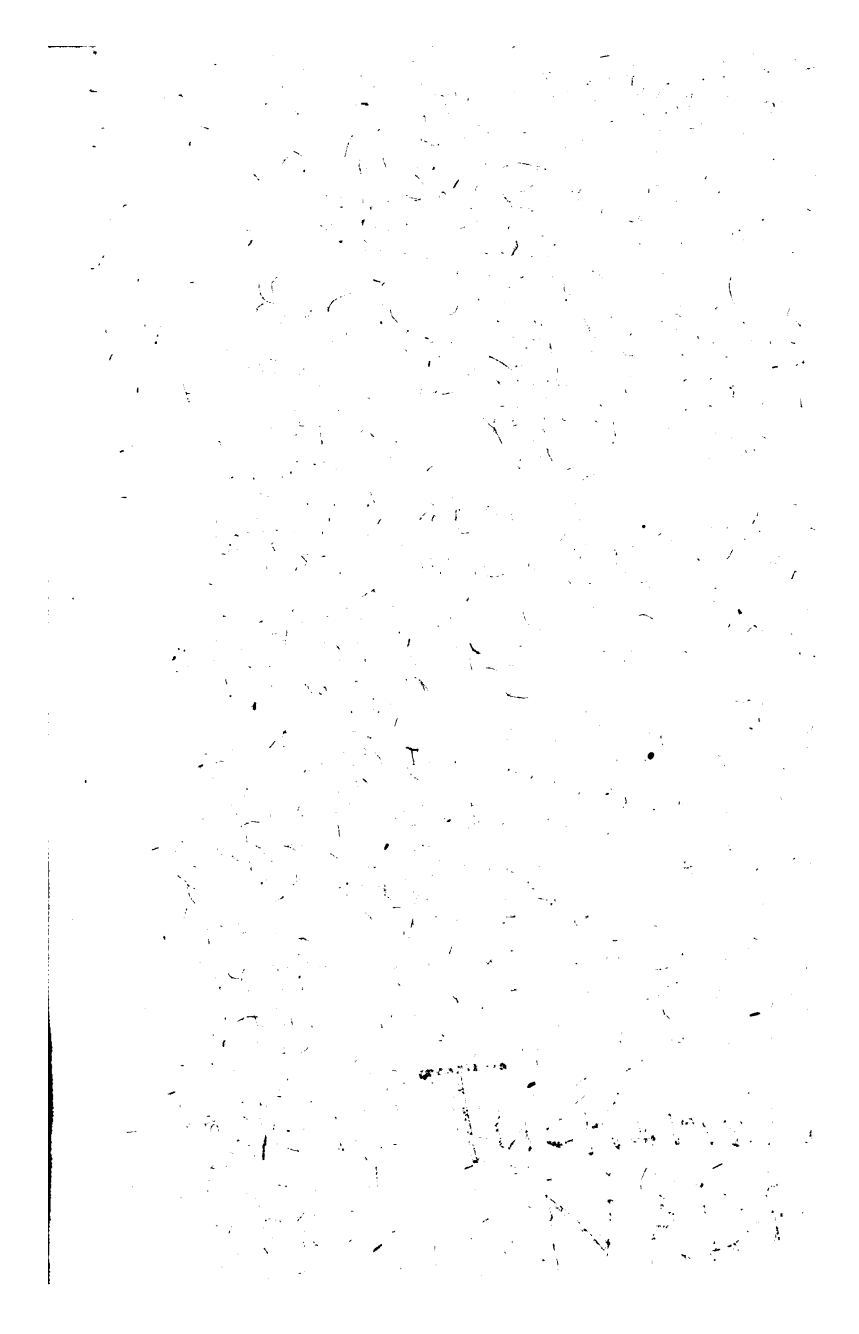
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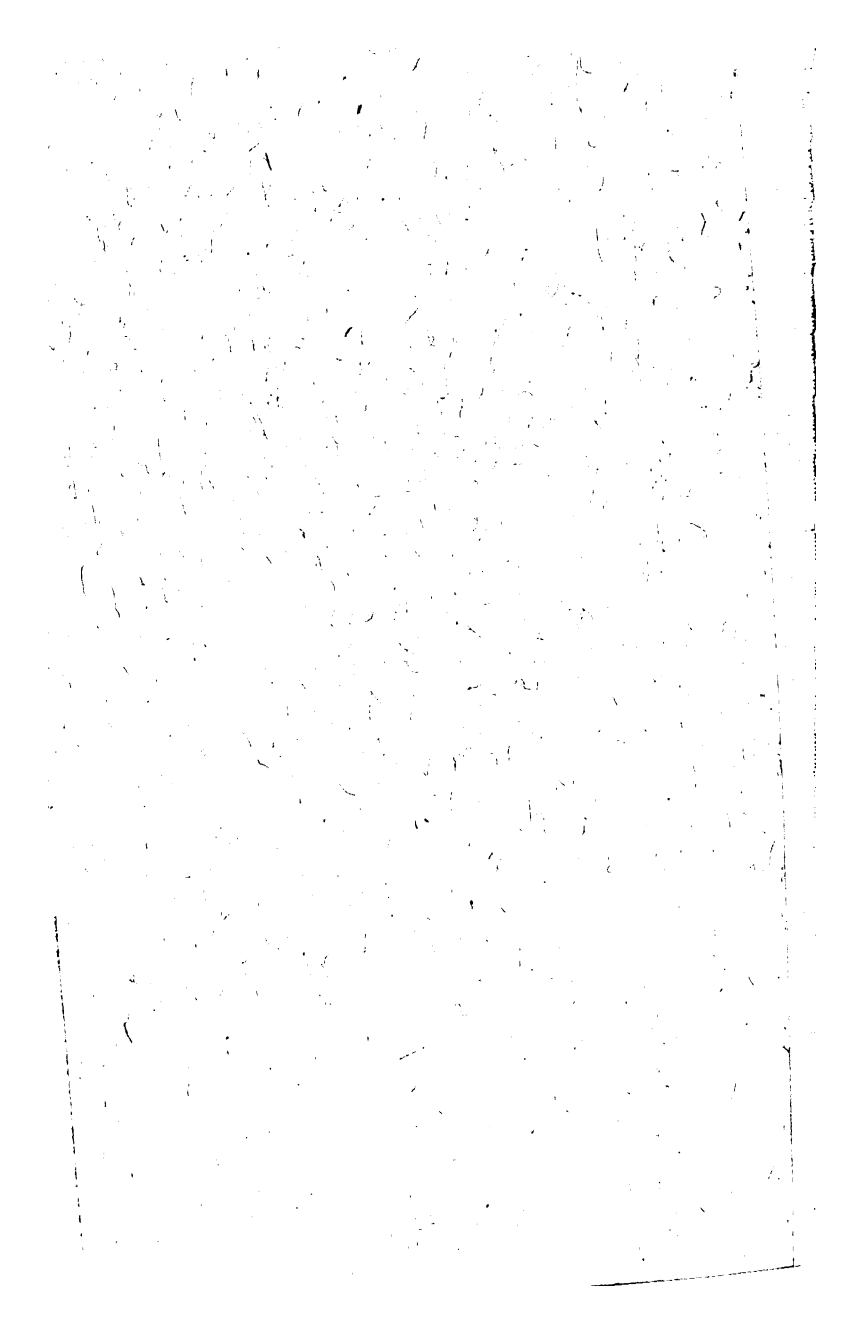
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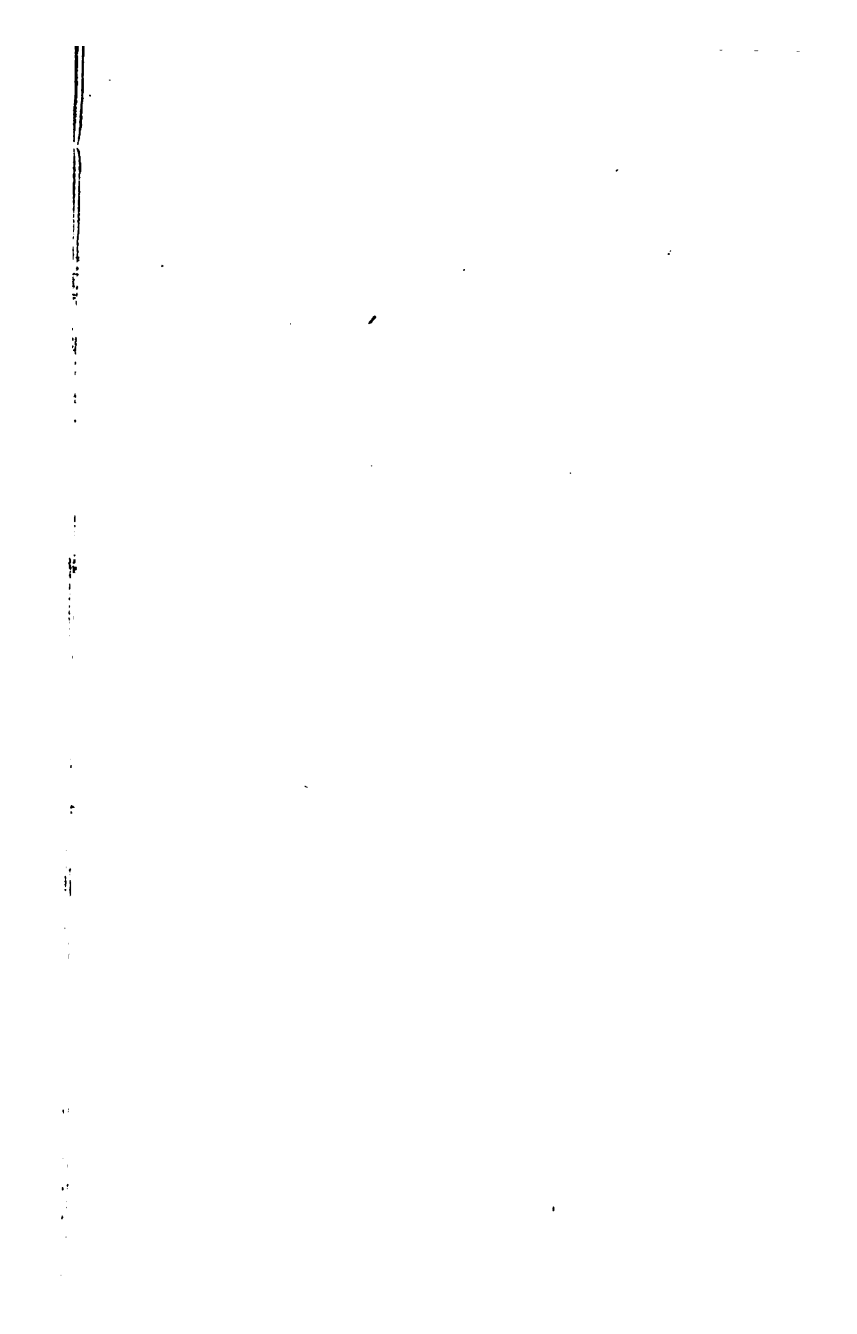
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LEAVES FROM THE DIARY  
OF A DREAMER.

FOUND AMONG HIS PAPERS.

"Come, come, my lord, untie your folded thoughts,  
And let them dangle like a bride's loose hair."

DUCHESS OF MALFY.

*Henry James Pickering Esq.*



LONDON  
WILLIAM PICKERING

1853

*C. K.*

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

**T**HE old carriage-road between Lucca and Genoa, although, for the most part, it follows the shores of the Mediterranean, winds for some distance inland, and there are points of its course which unite a wild and umbrageous vicinity with a glorious seaward landscape. In such a locality is situated the little town of Massa, with its ancient castle, its grass-grown streets and picturesque scenery. The inn is approached without entering the old gateway; its lower story, as is common in Italy, presenting a basement porch in the rear, leading to the kitchen and stables. At this primitive entrance, the *caleche* which had brought me from a neighbouring town drew up at noon, on a beautiful spring day; and, while the ostler watered our steed which had been four hours traversing the

adjacent hills, and yet seemed as fresh as when he started,—I walked about in the genial sunshine and looked forth upon the magnificent panorama of mountains, chestnut groves, emerald slopes, white stone cottages, and flowery patches ;—with, far away, the deep blue sea and, far above, the firmament reflecting the same tint of dense and crystal azure. Glancing towards the inn door, at the sound of a very deep yet subdued voice warbling a popular air, I saw one of the innkeeper's daughters, a cheerful and attractive brunette, with a flat-iron balanced in her upraised hand, moving towards a large table in the inner apartment, which was half covered with a pile of linen bleached to the whiteness of new-fallen snow. At the sight of a traveller, the pretty laundress came to the door, with a "*perdona excellenza*," and a respectful inquiry as to my nativity. A shade of disappointment passed over her face, when informed that I was not of English birth ; but, upon being made acquainted with the fact—to her evidently surprising—that many Americans were descended from the English, and that the latter language was their vernacular, her dark eyes brightened again and the coquettish smile

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returned. She invited me to a seat just within the archway, and still balancing the flat-iron upon an exquisitely proportioned arm, with great vivacity and not a little tenderness, related the following circumstances :—"A month ago two young gentlemen had stopped here to dine; one was too ill to proceed, and after lingering a week, sometimes sitting on the very chair I occupied, and looking pensively on the same landscape, and sometimes secluded for hours in his own room, with the friend, who scarcely left him for a moment;—a travelling carriage arrived late at night, and two ladies, one somewhat advanced in years and the other of rare beauty though pale and tearful, alighted,—inquired for the health of the invalid, and hastened to his chamber. During that entire night the three affectionate watchers soothed the dying man; who now appeared calm and grateful: solemn was the grief of the maiden, delicate and thoughtful the devotion of the others; and at dawn he fell into a gentle slumber, his head on the breast of his friend, and his hand in the hand of his betrothed, and so passed away."

I know not how much of the pathetic and

continuous impresson which this incident made upon my mind, is to be ascribed to the sympathetic manner and natural eloquence of the narrator, how much to the beautiful scenery around me, or to my own mind at the time ; but certain it is that the hour I passed at the old inn of Massa, stands out in affecting relief from the reminiscences of travel, and recurs with a melancholy charm, like one of Sterne's episodes. I examined the landlord's register and ascertained the names of the party described ; and subsequently sought them out and found ample confirmation not only of the details of the story, but of the long and beautiful perspective which imagination and sympathy had naturally annexed to these hints of a vivid experience. When the fair hostess perceived that I was interested in her story, she laid aside the flat-iron, wiped her eyes with a corner of her apron, and gliding up the rough stone staircase outside, presently returned with a morocco portfolio carefully incased in three or four copies of "Galignani's Messenger." This she earnestly begged me to transmit to the friends of the deceased, as it had been inadvertently left behind,

—a commission I scrupulously fulfilled. The only survivor of the scene at the inn at Massa, (with whom I afterwards enjoyed long intimacy,) is the young man who first arrived with the invalid. He is now settled in a distant part of the globe; and, at our parting interview, he gave me a journal in the handwriting of his friend, and part of the contents of the portfolio restored through my instrumentality, as a memorial of our intercourse, and with full permission to use it as I pleased, on condition that all names or allusions that might lead to their discovery should be suppressed. Upon ascertaining that the writer was a countryman, although for many years a resident on the continent, my interest in him became more personal; and the confidence of those who were near and dear to him has since rendered that familiarity so great that I can now scarcely persuade myself I am writing of one whom I never saw. Perhaps this knowledge of all the circumstances of his peculiar experience, has invested his speculations with an interest they will rarely inspire among those to whom no such associations recommend them. The manner, however, in

which the specimens that have appeared in a periodical form were received, induces the belief that these stray leaves from the Diary of a Dreamer will be acceptable to a larger circle.





## LEAVES FROM THE DIARY OF A DREAMER.

### CHAPTER I.

**I**T is now a week since I re-crossed the Apennines. It seems a month. The journey greatly enlivened me : Autumn was rapidly giving way to winter, but her sober hues, without the varied brilliancy that distinguishes them in America, wore a pensive richness, a shadowy glory that in my prevailing mood, possessed a singular charm. I constantly left the carriage and sauntered for miles in advance. The keen and transparent air was like a cordial. The shaggy hills stretching far away on either side in picturesque undulations, seemed to repose in sublime content. As I walked along in my comfortable *blouse* and tartan cap, a delicious sense of independence, an exhilarating consciousness of individuality filled my heart, and often the

clatter of our heavy vehicle or the baying of a shepherd's dog, startled me from a delightful reverie. I realized at such moments a trust and hope which social relations, with all their solace, rarely afford. I thought I could gladly dream away existence in this beautiful country. On reaching the city, every thing looked cheerful; lights beamed from the dwellings, people moved to and fro or clustered in groups, there was an appearance of busy and exuberant life which contrasted most agreeably with our recent isolation. The moment I was alone in my chamber, a violent re-action took place in my mood. It was the hour when the heart yearns for companionship, when the mind is impatient to unfold itself without restraint; the hour so affectingly described by Dante:

" l'ora che volge 'l dì fio  
A naviganti, e'ntenerisce 'l cuore  
Lo dì, ch'han detto a dolci amici, a Dio;  
E che lo nuovo peregrin, d' amore  
Punge, se ode squilla di lontano,  
Che paia 'l giorno pianger, che si muore."

*Purg. Cant. 8.*

Solitude began to be intolerable. I went forth and entered the Cathedral. A deep glow from the painted window yet suffused the altar. Elsewhere in the vast area all was dusky and



vague, save where the white angle of a funeral tablet or the dim folds of a banner were visible. There is something tranquillizing in these magnificent temples. I lingered until the stars appeared, and then hastened to the residence of Colonel H——, who occupies one of the most elegant dwellings near the walls. It is half villa, half palace, and was leased by the noble family to whom it belongs, on very reasonable terms. There is a fine saloon on the ground floor, connected with the garden. What delightful hours I have spent there! The Colonel's lady is a creature of poetry; and then about many things we sympathize so perfectly. It was long, however, before I succeeded in invading the almost sacred reserve in which her spirit lives. She received me courteously as a countryman, but there was an evident indifference in her manners that piqued if it did not repulse. The Colonel, a frank, social man, gave me to understand that his wife was a great invalid, and averse to society. After tea, we usually walked into the garden, leaving her, much to my secret annoyance, to herself—for she is most fair to look upon. I am proud of her New England origin. With a graceful and elastic figure, large blue eyes, profuse auburn ringlets, a clear complexion and

features cast in a highly intellectual but most gentle mould, she is quite an ideal of northern beauty. There is something romantic in her manners and appearance, she loves to sit coiled up in a corner of the sofa, with her face half concealed by a veil, indeed, she is seldom without this nun-like adornment, and fails not to drop it the moment a stranger enters. The world calls it affectation, but she cares nothing for the world, and so consults only her own wishes as well in costume as in weightier affairs, despite all uncharitable commentators. Her history is peculiar. At an early age she finds herself the only survivor of a large and interesting family, all of whom fell victims to consumption, and she came hither to escape, if possible, the same fate. Her familiarity with death has thrown a beautiful melancholy around her youth. She loves the solitude of her own room, and resists all endeavours to withdraw her from domestic seclusion. Every one who obtains but a glimpse of her countenance, becomes interested at once. I have been remarkably fortunate in enjoying her intimacy. During intervals of relief from pain, and when sad memories are for a while laid asleep, she often is as buoyant and gamesome as a child. Her sensibility to nature is so great that a new

scene of beauty causes her to weep. Her dreams are highly poetical. She exists much of the time in the world of imagination; her faith is spiritual, and the departed share her thoughts with the living. Her children are the great sources of her happiness; the oldest is a cherub, his eyes vary in depth of hue as his feelings change, his brow, I heard an artist say, was perfectly ideal, and long, rich locks of paly gold stream from his head. It is a picture of surpassing loveliness to see mother and child together; as they gambol their ringlets intermingle, while an expression of the purest delight glows in their faces. They sit in quiet communion, and the very air seems hushed. I revel in domesticity at the Colonel's, I talk with the lady Harriet and play with little Carlo like one of the family. Sometimes we ride out together or go to a church festival. They have furnished the parlour in the American style since I left, it seemed quite like home to-night. How glad they were to see me! We discussed transatlantic news and plans for the winter. My young friend had been put to bed early on account of a slight cold, I stole into the room, and, shading the lamp with my hand, gazed on him asleep. His hair lay off from his brow in golden curls; a smile half-

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wreathed his lips ; the flush of innocent repose was upon his cheek. I looked on in silent admiration, when he awoke and recognized me with joyful caresses. From this scene of tranquil happiness I retired with peace at my heart, my faith in life was renewed, and in witnessing the enjoyments of others I endeavoured to banish my own vain regrets.

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I suppose we relish praise for our lesser qualities because it fortifies confidence. There is nothing more painful to a sensitive mind than a consciousness of some deficiency or peculiar excess in character. "Why, with such vivid perceptions, am I not conceited?" asked —. "Because they give you self-knowledge, which always induces meekness," was the reply. Men of sense, and women too, perhaps, who have a natural tendency to romance, mistrust themselves greatly in love. From repeated and often absurd excitement, they only come forth, at last, "perplexed in the extreme." The very intensity of emotion blinds, and often in the retrospect their conduct and feelings seem to have an almost insane aspect. Such phases of experience stand alone, in all the other interests of life they may have acted erroneously, but reason and chastened sensibility have never failed

them. It is on this account that true views of the philosophy of the subject would be invaluable. Could we but clearly distinguish between passion and sentiment, between affinity and fancy, the "suppliance of a minute," and choice, founded like gravitation, on an eternal law—the bandage would be partially removed from the eyes of love. But sentiment is a flower so delicate, so pre-eminently lovely, so peerless and dear, that they whom it most enriches shrink from analyzing what they can only recognize with trembling; like the fairy circling of the humming-bird over a honeysuckle, its action is infinitely refined, and eludes while it fascinates the glance. The wretch "compact of thankless earth," who profanely sought to gaze on the unveiled beauty of Godiva, was instantly struck with blindness. The legend symbolizes the fate of all ruthless invaders of the soul's hallowed ground. Yet there is one office which records such as these fulfil. In as far as they define the real ore, they make it more easily distinguished, and prevent, in a measure, the currency of spurious metal. Every true picture of the heart annihilates a hundred counterfeits. It is one thing to speculate coldly upon love, to array phrenology and common-sense against poetic instincts,

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and it is another and a more reverent task to unfold the light and shade, the depth and gradation, the sanctity and the loveliness of human feeling. The "contagion of the world's flow stain" is ever at work. Life diffuses instead of concentrating the heart. It is fit that there should be priests of love to keep up the olden worship in all its vital simplicity and entire devotion. Such is the poet—not as a rhymers, but as a man; let him for ever advocate what vapid sentimentalism too often makes ridiculous and worldliness freezes by contempt. I delight in the idea of unconscious ministries, in the belief that human beings accomplish vast ends by insensible means; that the elements of the social world, like those of the natural, operate with an infinite quietude. There are apostles who live and die without any written record—poets who exercise their vocation without a lyre, and lovers divided not in life or death, yet over whom no nuptial benediction has been uttered. Universities with all their parchment degrees and sonorous hieroglyphics have never absorbed wisdom; academies cannot monopolize truth nor armies valour, there is an undercurrent, stronger because invisible, to the sea of life. In the material world we are assured by science that there is not a particle of waste;

are genius and love so valueless that they scatter no seed? Are they alone bereft of the principle of eternal renewal? Let "Nature's laureate bard" answer:

"Heaven doth with us as we with torches do;  
Not light them for themselves: for if our virtues  
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike  
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touched,  
But to fine issues; nor nature never lends  
The smallest scruple of her excellence,  
But like a thrifty goddess she determines  
Herself the glory of a creditor,  
Both thanks and use."

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Life in the open air has a singular charm for the native of climates where, for the greater part of the year, it is necessary to look within doors for comfort. Perhaps one reason why the English are so addicted to field-sports, is that they seek to revel in a free exposure to the elements, because with them, such enjoyments are comparatively limited. It seems like a return to the unrestrained and buoyant spirit of Nature, when months glide by and find us almost hourly abroad in that careless exercise of being which is the privilege of southern countries. I am fond of by-way pictures of life, and deem myself fortunate when any characteristic scene presents itself. The air to-day was remarkably cool, so

that a walk along the sunny margin of the water proved very agreeable, I lingered near a Sicilian story-teller for an hour, to watch his expressive looks and mark the quick sympathy of his audience. They consisted principally of swarthy fishermen, reclining on the sand, their sunbrowned faces turned in the direction of the speaker, and their eyes of gleaming jet, one moment softened by pity and the next flashing with anger. Their jaunty caps were pushed from their brows, and beneath them straggling locks fluttered in the wind. A few stood leaning upon the poles of their nets. They were exactly like the figures that Salvator loves to introduce into the fore-ground of his sea-pieces. It is delightful, even in their humble way, to recognize something in life which art or literature has made familiar. Even the old crones that one encounters at the street corners twirling the distaff, remind the lover of Shakespeare of the enamoured Duke's request in *Twelfth Night*, for that "piece of song" of which he so feelingly says :

"It is old and plain :

The spinners and the knitters in the sun  
And the free-maids that weave their thread with bones,  
Did use to chant it : it is filly sooth,  
And dallies with the innocence of love  
Like the old age."

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T——, in his cordial way, manages to impart new relish to the diminutive game they serve up at our frugal meal, by quoting with great zest the line from Beppo: "I also like to dine on beccaficos." One of the spots most fertile in the picturesque is the thronged angle of a street I daily pass, where a scribe, who might fit for the apothecary's portrait in *Romeo and Juliet*, is seated at his little table with a pile of yellow paper before him, an inkhorn at his button-hole, and his little wild eyes through his antiquated spectacles gravely following the movements of his busy pen. A burly friar of the Capuchin order sometimes is beside him, dictating a memorandum of the ale of his convent produce, or a weather-worn soldier in faded uniform, is puzzling his brain to manufacture a page in reply to his wife's last epistle. A better discipline whereby to learn the art of mental abstraction cannot well be imagined. The gay equipage and the rattling team, the shouts of vendors and the ceaseless hum of a passing throng, are quite unregarded by the industrious scribe. To-day, in the greatest possible contrast with this caricature of humanity, there leaned over his chair a buxom peasant girl. Her basket of fruit was on the pavement at her feet; her large straw hat rested coquettishly on the side of

her head ; a dark boddice revealed a form “ of rounded slenderness ; ” and the short robe made visible a pretty foot, on which her gaze was intently turned, while she played with the little silver cross that hung from her neck and murmured tremblingly in the old scrivener’s ear, a letter to her absent lover.

Sentiment brings us back to truth. We cannot flatter one who has awakened a real interest in our minds ; we can more easily reprove. A delicate and vigilant consideration that makes us observant of every change of mood, aware even of latent illness, and painfully conscious of each unfortunate tendency of character, is one of the best tests of love. Kindness, unceasing and thoughtful, anticipating every wish, and overflowing in word, act, and manner, is the truest pledge of affection. I would fain believe that these indications are appreciated by a few women ; but to how many are such noble and genuine demonstrations less impressive than exaggerated praise and unmanly adaptation ! I do not believe in ——’s love for the man of her choice. She ministers only to his pride. Here is the immense evil society does woman. It is a hot bed in which her approbation—the parasite upon life’s rarest tree—is fatally nurtured. Seclusion is said to be unfavourable to

moral vigour; absolute solitude undoubtedly is, but promiscuous association almost invariably perverts all but the strongest and purest hearts. Nature has solved this problem. The secret of all that is holy and felicitous in the influence of woman lies in the better preservation of her soul. Man's vocations constantly expose him to the world, and if the idea of a better humanity were not kept alive in his daily path by the superior freshness of the other sex, he would wander irretrievably from faith and peace. To this end woman's lot is private. Fashion is perpetually encroaching upon the divine order of things. Let any unprejudiced spectator see the blush of modesty upon the cheek of a woman who has lived apart "unspotted from the world," let him mark the engaging air of distrust which is the most eloquent appeal in the universe to the heart of man—the beautiful dignity of conscious rectitude, the quick and disinterested sympathy, the meek self-contentment—and feel all that is high and good within him stir at the fountains of his soul, and all that is base shrink awe-struck from her eye, and he will ardently bless the retirement that has kept such graces undimmed. Let him then witness the complacent and fearless bearing of a fair creature whose manner is hackneyed by custom, and arti-

ficial from habit, with intellect ever on the alert, and all that is spontaneous and true subdued by the tyranny of selfishness to calculation and pride, and he will leave her, beautiful and gifted as she may be, only thus bitterly to muse on her charms :—

“ Yet I half hate her—she has all  
That would ensure an angel’s fall—  
For there’s a cool, collected look,  
As if her pulses beat by book,  
A measured tone, a cold reply,  
A management of voice and eye ;  
A calm, possessed, authentic air,  
That leaves a doubt of softness there ;  
Till look and worship as I may,  
My fevered thought will pass away.”

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My organ of benevolence has never been thought deficient, and yet I could almost find it in my heart to wish that every mortal were temporarily denied health. Nothing less will teach people consideration for those who thus suffer. How natural is the second-thought of poor, vexed Lear, prompted by the sympathy born of pain !

“ Tell the hot duke that—  
No, but not yet,—may be he is not well,  
Infirmity doth still neglect all office  
Whereto our health is bound ; we are not ourselves,  
When Nature, being oppressed, commands the mind  
To suffer with the body.”

A cleverer fellow than P——, in the ordinary sense of the term, is not often encountered, yet an hour's argument has failed to convince him of the unreasonable offence he has taken at my recent taciturnity. His nerves are of iron and his digestion that of an ostrich. Physical inconvenience is so rare in his experience as to be but dimly apprehended. These long weeks of pain and feebleness, when all mental energy was absorbed in mere endurance, and the causes of moral disquietude rendered thrice keen and trying—pass for nothing in his estimation. Because I have only smiled at his jokes, spared my breath from necessity and found no refuge but in comparative silence, he deems me unfriendly and indifferent. Cassius described Cæsar's inaptitude when ill as a disparagement: "'Tis true, this god did shake." Should not friendship consider it by way of forbearance? To be calm and uncomplaining I flattered myself was a little triumph; but those hale, impervious, and therefore exacting friends, expect not only patience but gaiety. "These are counsellors that feelingly persuade me what I am;"—so said the royal exile of the elements; how justly it may be said of the "ills that flesh is heir to!" As my quaint favourite remarks in a like condition, of late I have been unable "to distinguish veal from mut-

ton." My perceptions have been blunted, my relish of life sadly deficient; only at intervals have my musings been other than sad, even to despair. A lethargic throb confused my brain; everything looked distorted or gloomy, and existence was burdensome. How often have I recalled Sterne's prayer: "Gracious Heaven! grant me but health, thou great bestower of it, give me but this fair goddess for my companion, and shower down mitres, if it seem good unto thy divine providence, upon those heads that are aching for them!" I have heard some persons base their faith in immortality upon the unequal distribution of good and evil in this world, and others claim it as a necessary consequence of human endowments, which require higher and endless development. Does not the intimate sympathy of body and soul furnish yet another ground for the same inference? Think of the interruption, the depression, the perversion which the mind suffers from any derangement of the physical organs. How dependent for its clear and strong exercise is the most gifted intellect upon a healthy frame! Thought grows disconnected, sentiment becomes morbid, and imagination gloomy, when the pulse is quickened by fever, or the nerves unstrung by weakness. I have known individuals, all of whose faults of

character seemed to be derived from bodily infirmity; they needed but to "shuffle off this mortal coil" to be perfect.

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This convalescence is delicious. I seem to have acquired new zest for the humblest enjoyment. To trace the flowers on the chintz bed-curtains, or watch the flies upon the wall, is diverting. Voices from the street give me a sweet feeling; they speak of genial activity. I long for green fields. My eyes follow the nurse's movements with avidity. I have been less entertained at a good play. The flowers that some thoughtful friend daily sends, appear more fresh and bright than any I have seen for years. How very cheering is the sunshine! Such cream in the morning! I have been dipping into Scott—no; I tried to do so, but, as usual, it ended in a regular refusal. I rejoice that *Ivanhoe*, and *Jeannie Deans* are as vivid and dear as ever. How these familiar and cherished beings enliven the languid hours of the invalid! Scott was right in esteeming this one of the best of his agencies as a novelist. I read him with a more tender gratitude since *Lockhart's* life appeared; hearing ever the ripple of the *Tweed* on that summer day, breaking the solemn quietude of his death-chamber.



## CHAPTER II.

**R**AIN, rain, rain ! All day the clear drops have pattered against my window. A bed of fiery embers glow upon the hearth-stone and near by is heaped a pile of fagots. There is something alike primitive and rural about these combustibles that suits my humour better than the elaborate inventions of colder climes. Fagots have a place in old rhymes and stories, they illumine the caverns of banditti and the stakes of witches and martyrs ; the thrall of Cedric the Saxon twisted them in Sherwood forest, and their blaze was reflected on the polished armour of Giovanni di Medici in the passes of the Apennines. Yes, fagots are decidedly more poetical than sea-coal. On the table is a vase of Etruscan form, with flowers ; strange that almost the only memorial of a people should thus exist in the graceful designs of their house-



hold ware! Yet modern taste cannot excel them. How sweetly tempered is the light! It is a positive relief in this country to be without the glare of sunshine occasionally. Nature seems to retire, as it were, that she may come forth again in brighter array. How pleasant is this seclusion! More than once I have laid aside my book and paced the floor to ask myself why I am so happy. Now that's a procedure which betrays one's nationality. It argues that very "thinking too precisely" to which the melancholy Dane ascribed his irresolution—a truly Northern over-consciousness. "Who but an English philosopher," asks Sterne, "would have sent notice of it to the brain?" Yet one may rightfully look inward when alone. I consider the great proof of the superior power of women over every other attraction, is that they absolutely charm to sleep this metaphysical restlessness. The most intense personality can be thus subdued for a time. We were made

"In all enjoyments else  
Superior and unmoved, here only weak  
Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance."

It seems as if a pitying angel sometimes reassured the heart. Scenes of the past have flitted before me continually, all reposing in mellow light. The forms of the beautiful and

loved have smiled from their distant homes, the fever of desire has cooled, and a tranquil hope arisen. It is well thus to step aside and be alone; it is at times a moral necessity. Privacy has its own joys; perhaps rainy days were ordained to secure them. I believe men that are wholly gregarious can neither think nobly nor love deeply. "That man, in my opinion," says Montaigne, "is very miserable who has not at home where to be by himself, where to entertain himself alone, or to conceal himself from others." "Nella società," writes Foscolo, "si legge molto, non si medita, e si copia; parlando sempre, si svapora quella bile generosa che fa sentire, pensare e scrivere fortemente; per balbettare molte lingue, si balbetta anche la propria." They are but superficial observers who deem the occasional hermit a cold egotist. Mary Wolstencraft, whatever may be thought of her theories, had no common discernment and feeling, and she most truly remarks that "solitude and reflection are necessary to give to wishes the force of passions and to enable the imagination to enlarge the object and make it more desirable." Thus do I reason and quote authorities to justify my present content. So happy, and — not by! Yes; when love is a high principle of affinity it is its own

reward ; it enters into the very soul. Richter's wife, after her first interview with him, before a word had been uttered on the subject of love or marriage, felt her destiny achieved, and told her father that she could be happy henceforth even if she saw him no more. The reverence and tenderness of her nature had found its legitimate object and this brought harmony and peace. Would that a more gradual development were permitted the women of my country ! Why should the outward activity of life there whirl them also from their true good ? A more secluded and individual being would result in richer and truly feminine graces. De Tocqueville, one of the few who thought while he observed our republic, discovered an important fact ; and his allusion to it shows the insight of the philosopher while it recognizes the want of the poet : " American women begin to reason very early. There is scarcely time for the meditation which precedes and accompanies great emotions of the heart." Accordingly I have always perceived the greatest depth of sentiment among married women at home, whose hearts experience had deepened or sorrow touched.

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The peculiar charm of Shakespeare's women lies in the probability of their characters. Our

credulity is tasked, for the most part, by the situations in which they are placed, but their personal excellencies are so very human and consistent that we yield with joy to the illusion and easily come to regard them as actual existences. In love especially, do they "conform the show of things to the desires of the soul." Its development in each case takes place according to the laws of individuality. Portia, who is all magnanimity and possessed of that sustaining energy which made her "queen o'er herself," is won by love to a kind of luxurious self-renunciation :

"Happiest of all, is that her gentle spirit  
Commits itself to yours, to be directed,  
As from her lord, her governor, her king."

The blithsome Rosalind — a creature with whom "to fleet the time as in the golden age," follows a native tendency when she endeavours to reason sportively of a sentiment which would be oppressive to such a nature if met in a more serious temper : "Love is merely madness, and I tell you deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do ; and the reason why they are not so punished and cured is, that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too."

Helena, with her firmness of purpose and singleness of heart, illustrates the vitality of true

love under every discouragement. In the exaltation of the sentiment, unreciprocated as it is, she finds her reward :

“ Indian-like,  
Religious in mine error, I adore  
The sun, that looks upon his worshipper,  
But knows of him no more.”

Deirdre, whose love unkindness can never taint, proves how sublime may be the faith of affection.

Miranda, with her unperturbed instincts, recognizes at once the mate of her soul, and cannot be made to believe that one more kindred can be found in all that world to which she is so utterly a stranger :

“ My affections are then most humble :  
I have no ambition, to see a goodlier man.”

Imogen is an example of the completeness of genuine love. Life has for her but one centre, around which all its minor interests revolve. She declares herself

“ Not comforted to live  
But that there is this jewel in the world  
That I may see again.”

What a glorious contrast between Cordelia and Cleopatra ! “ The wrangling queen whom everything becomes,” embodies in the most

vivid and dazzling manner the waywardness, caprice, and voluptuous phases of the sentiment in its "unchastened freedom;" whilst Lear's modest daughter is a perfect illustration of that

"Tardiness in nature  
That often leaves the history unspoke  
That it intends to do."

Juliet is love personified. With her it becomes a principle, the absolute element of her soul:

"My bounty is as boundless as the sea,  
My love as deep; the more I give to thee  
The more I have, for both are infinite."

Though Shakespeare often portrays love as created through the medium of the senses, how eloquently he vindicates it from mere fancifulness and sensuality! In his characters it exists as a grand moral reality—eliciting the noblest powers of the soul, and warming into transcendent beauty every latent grace and holy gift. To these loyal, graceful, tender and modest women, let the sceptical ever turn. True they are beautiful abstractions—the ideals of the sex—yet who feels not that they have a divine "touch of nature" by which they are allied to humanity? Who cannot find traces of them in the living? Who will not cherish the belief that their counterparts actually exist?

"The pangs of despised love," says the Prince, in enumerating the reasons for a voluntary exit from this troubled sphere. He could scarcely have referred to an individual rejection, for Ophelia, the fair, the gentle, the refined, whose intellect was jarred into discord by the unkindred influences of the world—Ophelia loved him. He had in view rather the incongruity of the sentiment itself, the rarity of its recognition, the exceeding minority of those who can ardently, and without hesitation, brave selfishness and circumstance to realize its completeness. To the true man, to him who thinks and feels with integrity and earnestness, woman is the heaven of existence. She confirms his noblest attributes, and invades, like a sunbeam, the cold dimness of time. Through her influence the spell of ambition is overcome, and the grasp of avarice loosened, the pure glow of childhood renewed, and every generous element insensibly fostered. Baffled tenderness is the surest and most universal motive to scepticism. The priest at God's altar bows in silent prayer before he enters on his ministration; the bard goes into the lonely forest, or beside the moonlit stream, to deepen his thoughts for utterance; and if woman had but a faint consciousness of her spiritual agency, with a no less instinctive

wisdom would she turn to Heaven, for guidance in her sublime vocation.

“ They know not what they do,” is the best plea she can offer in extenuation of her errors. Unblinded by vanity, for how much of moral evil would she be accountable? Landor says a man’s heart is sensitive in proportion to its greatness; it only needs an adequate sense of the absolute value of a great heart, to awe the beings who can sway its emotions into reverence and consideration; better live in ignorance of the sweets of conquest, and never know the pride of beauty, than feel the secret and keen remorse of trifling with the most god-like of things. Every autobiography—history itself, when written from its primeval sources, proves that the mightiest agencies are the most latent. The hidden wild flower exhales a perfume more delicate and sweet than the flaunting ornaments of the gardens, and no philosophic eye can scan the machinery of society without discovering that its main springs are the “ concealed treasures of a man locked up in woman’s love.” They are the sources whence the grandest and most pervading song, the deepest strains of the composer, the loftiest deeds of the hero, and the purest integrity of the man of honour, ever spring. Human grief has found its



most plaintive utterance, truth its most vigorous defence, and life its most beautiful interpretation from the affections. The grave and consistent bearing of thoughtful manhood, the holy enthusiasm of youth, the serene wisdom of age, are all blended with those feelings which Byron describes as the ocean to the river of thought. Some channel of merely human association was requisite to enable the spiritual to conquer the mortal, to link the sympathies of a child of clay to immortality, and to such an office human love was ordained. The system of the Platonists, the teachings of poets from the earliest time, the dictum of all high philosophy, the voice of the soul herself, when clearly audible—all our most actuating experience points to this truth.

Hear one of the chief modern apostles of reality. "Your poor Werter blowing out his distracted existence because Charlotte will not have the keeping thereof—this is no peculiar phasis; it is simply the highest expression of a phasis traceable wherever one human creature meets another."

Yes, there is vast reason for the prominence of love in human affairs, and for the essential relation it sustains to all that interests the mind in literature and art. Is it not a "glow which

to shut inward is a consuming pain?" The very smile with which its discussion is met, the badinage of society in regard to its details, the lightsome manner in which its follies are rehearsed, prove that it *may* be a thing too solemn and oppressive for ordinary life. We cannot but feel that

"There is in love

A consecrated power, that seems to wake  
Only at the touch of death, from its repose  
In the profoundest depths of thinking souls."

Men of sentiment are generally men of humour. We naturally turn to the quaint and the gay for relief from the pressure of emotion, feeling that "that way madness lies." In the inmost sanctuary of the heart, where its native traits have never been subdued, a voiceless worship is maintained for the mysterious principle, through which

"as tale and history tell,  
And sculptured marble grey,  
And oracle and festal rite  
Surviving man's decay,  
Through which all things are beautiful,  
And peaceable and strong,  
And joy from every thing is born,  
And mercy conquers wrong."

\* \* \* \* \*

We visited the —— collection again to-day.  
The enjoyment of art depends greatly upon the

existing mood. In some states of mind and health, there is something oppressive in the fairest natural scenes. One of our brilliant American days has often affected me thus painfully. The exceeding freshness of sky, herbage and air, bring too exciting an impression unless the spirits are high. In such weather one is constantly impelled to mount a horse. There is a want of neutral tints, a certain buoyancy of the elements exhilarating when met by glad-some activity, but otherwise discordant and ungenial. The "sober livery" is then most welcome; thus, too, a mind at ease can best relish the quiet ministry of art. We were precisely in the vein to-day. The comments of — were delightful. He has a deep love of the beautiful, and boundless human sympathy. He needed no wiser interpreter; where the pencil had been true to nature, where grace and feeling hallowed the canvases, how instantly he recognized it! How much sweeter the artless impressions of such a pure and loving spirit, than the pedantic jargon of the connoisseur! We stood long before a portrait of Alfieri. From the back of this picture I copied his true and expressive sonnet that so well describes the trials of baffled enthusiasm. There is vast meaning in these lines:—

"Irato sempre, e non maligno mai,  
La mente e il cor meco in perpetua lite:  
Per lo piu mesto, e talor lieto assai."

S——, who was with us, like all physiologists, has a very summary way of deciding such problems of character. With what provoking complacency these gentlemen approach the mysteries of the soul; as if the scalpel had even penetrated beyond secondary causes! A delicate organization, say they, renders the perceptions refined; hence reality often disgusts, and the world of imagination is sought as a needful consolation. This is contrary to the laws of our nature, according to which reason should be paramount; when feeling and fancy usurp its dominion, the nerves are weakened, the tone of health lowered, and life abbreviated. Thus they begin and end with physical causes, and the great moral deduced is to bring up children in habits of exercise, and teach them to shun meditative habits and novel reading. Horatio's temperament is unquestionably very desirable, "the blood and judgment well commingled;" but one can scarcely listen with patience to S——, when he attempts to discourse on the mysteries of life. Because he is hale, equable in his feelings, and content to be absorbed in investigating the habits of some shell-fish with

an unpronounceable latin name ; because his consciousness reveals no tender and mystic emotion, he thinks there are no " more things in heaven and earth, than are dreamed of in his philosophy."





## CHAPTER III.

**T**HE morning broke grey and heavily. As we tarried at a huge gateway for a passenger, I sat wrapped in my cloak in a corner of the coach feeling as desolate as if exiled for ever from all that endears life. The flower-girl of whom I have so often bought geraniums and violets, passed with her richly-laden basket. She threw me a bouquet, and her *buon viaggio*, cheerily uttered as she sped nimbly on, first effectually aroused me. At length the impatient *vetturino* ushered his laggard prey, a "little man in black," into the vehicle. He took his seat with a very gentlemanly salutation, and then gazed intently up at one of the windows of the house. A pale, fair countenance appeared; a white hand waved, the carriage moved rapidly on. I saw the stranger wipe tears from his eyes. Presently, he turned to-

ward me and began an animated conversation. Ere long, however, we both closed our eyes and became absorbed in our own thoughts. What a long day's ride! As we wound slowly among the mountains, a sentiment of deep melancholy possessed me. I could not see life in a cheerful aspect. It seemed to me as if what is richest, most exalted within us, must be perpetually repressed. To live only for one's self, to consume years in a round of petty cares and amusements having reference only to personal ends—how barren—joyless! Even the pursuit of knowledge is unattractive except as a means. Must the beautiful be renounced? Cannot will, imagination, and feeling redeem the actual? If, indeed, the law of human destiny be to sacrifice the ideal at the altar of necessity—is it ordained that we shall be thwarted in all our aspirations, baffled in our best affections? I no longer wondered at monastic life, and looked with complacency upon every convent we passed. "Methought the cowl would fit me well." At the miserable town of —, where we dined, Signor —, my fellow-traveller, proposed visiting the church to see a celebrated tomb. We found it surmounted by the embalmed bust of a bishop. The features were distorted but remarkably preserved.

An interesting conversation beginning with death and ending with love ensued. I was not long in discovering that the gentleman was a political refugee. His emotion at leaving——, sprung from the extraordinary kindness he had experienced from a family who had long afforded him an asylum. His story made me realize the universality of those trials which we are so apt to deem peculiar. As evening approached, I grew more at peace with myself. The sunset was beautiful amid the lovely hills, and it soothed my mind. I rejoiced that my feelings were not suffered to find utterance, that they had been thus seasonably curbed, and that neither honour nor peace had been invaded. I looked on the toil-worn peasants joyous over their wine; I listened to the village-girls singing as they came from the hill-side balancing their water-pitchers on their heads. I imbibed the clear tranquillity, the balmy repose of twilight, and grew resigned and hopeful. The spirit of love was abroad. I seemed to feel her brooding wings and was content. How very palatable at supper were the enormous roast chestnuts! A high wind arose after dark, and our host, a shaggily-dressed mountaineer, made a large fire in the huge chimney. It was a vast chamber—the floor stone, the walls



weather-stained, and the furniture scanty, the whole scene was precisely such as Mrs. Radcliffe is fond of describing. As a matter of course, we talked of ghosts and robbers, these personages haunted my slumbers, among other things, I dreamed that our carriage was stopped by a party of brigands, with the muzzles of their guns at our heads, our persons and trunks were thoroughly ransacked, I was astonished at my own indifference, methought I could not manage to feel a respectable tremor at the romantic danger of our position; when happening to glance at an adjoining thicket, I descried a group of prisoners over whom three brigands stood guard, and among them was ——! I rushed to her side, but was instantly seized and bound. Then I began to plead, and finally was allowed to become her substitute, while she was to return to ——, in our carriage and send a ransom. Methought days passed and nothing was heard from her. My existence she deemed, it appeared, quite unimportant! I was willing (so seemed it in my vision) to depart; I exulted at the thought that through me she was free! My captors grew impatient and I was led out to die. It was exactly such an evening as I had just enjoyed so highly. I stood in a desolate cleft of the hills.

The brigands aimed their muskets. I gazed a moment at the serene and rosy firmament, and the green earth, and then closed my eyes upon life. "*Siete pronto?*" (Are you ready?) muttered the leader in harsh tones. I replied affirmatively. A profound silence followed. I awaited the deadly charge, astonished at the delay. Again the same voice was audible, "*E molto tarde, signore,*" (It is very late, sir). I opened my eyes, and beheld staring me in the face, our brown and bearded *vetturino* with a little cup of coffee in his hand! The good fellow had awakened me according to promise.

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She would have rung for lights, but I checked the movement. As the twilight stole upon us, and the glowing embers just enabled me to trace every change of expression, while flickering shadows danced upon the wall, I felt it was an hour snatched from relentless fate. I shrank at the thought of breaking the spell. I was atoning for the day's gloom. On flowers at length was the foot of Time falling. There she sat! In her attitude was gentleness and reverence; in her eyes truth. The gentleness was from her nature, the reverence for the thoughts we had summoned—the truth from the reality of our moods. Sometimes her

hands were crossed upon her bosom ; sometimes the right supported her head, and over the white fingers fell the rich hair. Erect or bent forward, pensive or playful, in each motion there was grace, in each glance sensibility ! We spoke of destiny—of fame—of sympathy—of death—of love. Serene was our communion. Chapters of life were rehearsed ; superstitious feelings confessed, characters analyzed, verses quoted, castles in the air built. Yet had we no community of interest, no fellowship of destiny, no mutual hopes or fears. But calm delight stole over me ; grim doubts retreated ; content, temporary but pure content, was born. I was re-assured, solaced, inspired : I had drunk at a sweet fountain : I had laid my brow upon a consecrated altar : I had sent forth my constrained and dormant sympathies, as a shepherd at dawn lets loose his flock upon a green sward.

There was a revival of the dim and an exaltation of the cast down. With a quiet heart I walked homeward, musing upon the blessings of life—of the sunshine, and the pleasant breeze, relishing viands, and quaint thoughts, cheerful tales, generous companions, honourable duties, agreeable walks and noble deeds, but above all—of fair and kindly women.

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Three days in Switzerland, and the greater part of them spent in a diligence, afford but limited opportunities for observation. Yet I have received very definite impressions. The elasticity of the transparent air, the vivid tints of the plains and magnificent amphitheatre of mountains, though briefly enjoyed, at once captivated my senses and left lasting pictures on my memory. I thought at every interval of abstraction from the present scene, of my friends; and my musings were uniformly happy. My imagination rejected the idea of a permanent separation, and a deep conviction of future happiness occupied my mind.

“ Things without remedy  
Should be without regard.”

Absence is not necessarily a cause of misery. “ Distance,” says some one, “ injures true love less than nearness.” The sentimentalist was not so very absurd who excused himself for not visiting his mistress, by saying he staid away to think of her. Reminiscence is the great source of poetry. A prospect, a friend’s society, a rich experience may be too exciting at the moment of enjoyment, to allow the soul to take cognizance of its own emotions. It is

when we revoke the past, and its images softened by distance come back upon the heart, that we see them in the pure light of conscious love. What a proof is this of the capacities of the inward life, of the eternal principles involved in thought and affection! It is now the fashion to disparage Byron as a restless spirit whose fevered verse reflects no true impressions. Yet how few bards excel him in conveying the feeling an object inspires. He defines by sensation. As I leaned over the bridge at Geneva, and saw the indigo hue of the lake, and the peculiar shooting play of the waves, the meaning of one line in *Childe Harold* was completely realized. I understood, as never before, the significance of the phrase which, setting absolute sense at defiance, gives the exact idea of the spectator.

“The blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone.”

I heard an anecdote that evening of the poet, which was very characteristic, and quite new to me. When at Pisa, his lordship found it difficult to keep up his practice with the pistol on account of the objections of his neighbours and the municipal regulations of the place. He, therefore, by the aid of a small gratuity, obtained permission from a farmer in

the vicinity to shoot at a mark in his paddock. On the occasion of his first visit to the premises, the peasant's daughter, a very pretty *contadina*, accosted the bard after the genial manner of her country. She wore in her bosom a freshly-plucked rose with two buds attached to the stem. Byron sportively asked her to give him the flower. She hesitated, and blushed. He instantly turned to his companion and rehearsed in English a very natural tale of humble and virtuous love, bitterly contrasting the apparent loyalty of this fair rustic with women in high life. Then, with perfect seriousness, he again asked for the rose as a token of sympathy for an unloved exile. His manner and words moved the girl to tears. She handed him the rose with a look of compassion, and silently withdrew. The incident aroused his latent superstition. He was lost in a reverie for several minutes and then inquired of his friend if he remembered that Rousseau confessed throwing stones at a tree to test the prospects of his future happiness. The flower was devoted to a similar ordeal. It was carefully attached to an adjacent pale, and Byron having withdrawn several paces, declared his intention of severing one of the buds from the stalk at one fire. He looked very carefully to his priming and aimed

with great firmness and deliberation. The ball cut the bud neatly off, and just grazed the leaves of the rose. A bright smile illumined the poet's countenance, and he rode back to Pifa in a flow of spirits.

"Sense and sensibility!" Are they, indeed, essentially opposed to each other? Very clearly has Jane Austen solved the problem. She is described by her biographer as a woman of strong affections and high principles. Her novels sufficiently evidence her talent. There is an undeniable truth in her pictures of the heart. She has finely illustrated the difference between captivation and sympathy—between graces that intral the soul through the senses and traits of character which gradually win veneration, confidence and love. The permanent and temporary elements of the sentiment are well brought out, and the serene and wholesome bond of habit strikingly contrasted with the feverish spell of novelty.

I went to a soirée with P——, a month ago. He sung a duet with a very sweet-looking woman. Her tones came so richly to my ear, that I was induced attentively to note her appearance. As we walked home, I told P—— she was the prettiest girl in the assembly. "Do you think so?" he inquired. I was vexed at

his indifference, and became quite warm in eulogizing her attractions. He has known her from childhood, and describes her disposition as perfect. My remarks evidently made him reflect. To-day he came to me to announce his engagement, and I was amused to discover that he had been unconscious of the prize within his grasp until thus accidentally made to realize it. Familiarity had blinded him. "The Loan of a Lover" is based upon this curious effect of habit; and there are more Benedicks and Beatrices in the world "too wise to woo peaceably," than we are apt to imagine, the machinery of whose affections must be set a-going by a friendly hand, or roused to consciousness by a fortunate incident or enlivening dispute—anything, in short, that will bring about recognition. "We can all *begin* freely," says the heroine of "Pride and Prejudice," "a slight preference is natural; but there are very few of us who have heart enough to be really in love without encouragement."

Of this matter

"Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made  
That only wounds by hearsay."

\* \* \* \* \*

Prudence hardly seemeth to me a virtue un-



less sublimated by high motives. That the same cautious instinct which slowly enriches the trader contented only to "poke about for pence," should be deemed applicable to the heart's aspirations is absurd and sacrilegious. Yet thus what are called sensible and correct men talk. In their view fools alone sacrifice prosperity to enthusiasm. The loss of social consideration and the assumption of expense are evils, in their opinion, infinitely beyond any spiritual need. Fact often lends apparent support to such a creed, but the noble soul impatiently rejects it. How depressing these hopeless and literal arguments! Like the whirlwind of the desert, they blight all the verdure of life. "As a man thinketh, so is he." Forget not this, ye careful idolaters of comfort and position. Better the simplicity ye condemn, and the privations ye so strongly depict, than the quenching of all holy fire, and the passing away of that sensibility to beauty and truth through which what is immortal within us is kept conscious and alive.

There is great truth in this verse of a new but genuine poet :

"He, who for love has undergone  
The worst that can befall,  
Is happier thousand-fold than one  
Who never loved at all ;

A grace within his soul has reigned,  
Which nothing else can bring—  
Thank God for all that I have gained,  
By that high suffering!"—

There is an intuitive wisdom above the lessons of the world. There are inward facts that outweigh seeming reality. Oracles dwell in the hearts of the unperturbed, whose eloquence drowns the hollow murmurs of time. Go from the arid and depressing converse of one of these experienced counsellors who "live by bread alone," and walk beneath majestic trees. Every wave of their ancient boughs refutes the sordid maxims that weigh upon thy spirit.

The sunshine that chequers the pathway, the blue sky discernible through the overhanging umbrage, the fresh air that fans thee with its limitless wings—do they not all whisper of hope, and confirm thy trust in the benign issues of every noble impulse? "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her." And when speaks she in tones of deeper significance than at seasons consecrated to high and earnest feeling? Art thou not then nearer her mysteries? Set free by an absorbing sentiment from the thrall of habit and the dominion of consciousness, comes there not on every dashing wave and starry gleam, blest assurances and cheering

intimations? Does not the law of necessity seem to flit from the universe? Springs there not up in the bosom a new sense of the ministry of Nature? Look we not forth upon meadow and forest, the moss-clump and pebbly inlet, brooding shadow and dazzling waterfall, with a sentiment of relation and affinity alike novel and delightful? Then our hearts beat in unison with the spirit of love of which these are emblems. They respond to and sanction the emotions we breathe.

I came home yesterday, perplexed and sad. One whom I had cause to esteem, had complacently rehearsed the dreary proverbs of utility, and arrayed before me countless instances of the death of faith amid harsh experiences. It seemed as if life afforded no scope for exalted desire, as if wisdom and truth combined to set aside as wholly irrelevant and unreal the eternal pleadings of the heart. To escape the distrustful mood that weighed upon me, I opened the "Winter's Tale." Consoling genius! art thou not ordained of heaven? Shall I suffer meaner souls to alarm my trust, when at thy feet I can renew it for ever? A rustic home was around me. "Violets dim" shed a delicious perfume. I saw a fair scion of royalty that had "ranged with humble livers in con-

tent," and grown fair and true in the healthful embrace of nature, and now a new-born affection had crowned her graces with tenderness. An old courtier said to her—

" You know  
Prosperity's the very bond of love,  
Whose fresh complexion and whose heart together  
Affliction alters."

Perdita's reply, so simply beautiful, came like an echo from above :

" One of these is true ;  
I think affliction may subdue the cheek,  
But not take in the mind."





## CHAPTER IV.

THE English colony here gave a fine pic-nic yesterday. We left town in carriages, soon after day-break. The great drawback to our pleasure was a kind of siege we endured at the wretched village of ———. A crowd of beggars maimed, diseased, and half-naked, collected beneath the *locanda* windows, and rent the air with their cries. We distributed food and money among them, but the fierce struggle that ensued was appalling. Grey-haired men and ragged urchins, women seared with age and black from neglect and exposure, lay in the dust, scrambling for every gratuity, like wild beasts, while the screams of the half-smothered children were unnoticed in the uproar. It was a revolting spectacle, and occurring in the midst of that fertile region, reminded us of the primeval curse.

The perfection of a ride, seems to me to follow a good road between the sea and a range of mountains. In view of the two most sublime objects of Nature, the breeze from the hills mingling with the briny gale, the effect is highly exhilarating. How much is such enjoyment enhanced by the presence of those we love ! It is true we were not alone ; but there are times when promiscuous society only enables us more keenly to realize our *particular* sympathies. The landscape around filled us with peaceful thoughts, and the delightful air freshened every countenance. There was manifest, too, that subdued feeling so consonant with " thoughts too deep for tears." I turned my gaze from the sparkling waters and the verdant hill-sides to the kindly faces, and read in those deep and soft eyes all for which my heart longed. The freedom and beauty of Nature seemed to have utterly dispelled the indefinable alloy which has hitherto marred our unity of sentiment. The arrangements of the party kept us continually separate, and from morning until night only words of ordinary courtesy passed between us. Yet in several general discussions which ensued, we improved the occasion to utter opinions and fancies to which a particular but unbetrayed significance attached. An amusing

circumstance occurred after dinner. It so happened that Lady C—— (who is very lively and agreeable) and myself found ourselves during a listless stroll, in the vicinity of a beautiful fir-tree. The turf around was covered with wild flowers, and the shade at that hour seemed quite inviting. We spread a large shawl upon the ground and sat down to finish a somewhat animated debate on the subject of Catholicism. I stoutly defended many of the rites and peculiarities of mother church, and her ladyship was inclined to be very facetious. At length we came to auricular confession. This she agreed with me had its advantages, and was not without a legitimate basis in the wants and trials of our nature ; but to a friend, she argued, we could more appropriately “make a clean breast” than to any priest in Christendom. She even claimed the office for her own sex. In vain I represented their inability to keep a secret, and the danger of confession under such auspices taking too sentimental a turn. She was playfully obstinate, and at length proposed that we should try the experiment, in order that I might see how aptly a woman could fulfil the task. She folded the shawl gracefully about her, and assumed a very dignified look, then standing in a listening attitude, which was far from unbe-

coming, directed me to kneel before her and commence my penitential tale. I had just taken this position and began a grotesque narrative, when a noise like suppressed breathing caught my ear. At the same moment a merry laugh was heard and the whole party broke in upon our retirement. The *tableau*, though repeatedly explained, was too good a joke to pass in silence, and we were bantered about it all the way home.

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It is strange that so much restlessness can obtain, without a particle of remorse! That seems the only legitimate cause of such keen uneasiness. For days and months I have lived in retirement. The men and women around me were like shadows, I have avoided all association with my race beyond what courtesy demands, I have read in the stillness of my chamber, or wandered forth to obtain inward quiet by physical activity and external objects. This way of life may have been useless, yet it sometimes yields a certain vague tranquillity. It is true, deep and craving sympathies will mine, as it were, into the heart, yet when one is conscious of a false position, but feels that to be a looker-on in life, demands a martyr's patience, there is a difficult problem to



solve. Yet not for the broad strife of ambition, nor for the highway of pleasure, should we pine. Somewhat I already know of both—enough to convince me that the fruit they bear, when exclusively pursued, may turn to dust on the lips. A sequestered but intense experience, a private but satisfying activity is the need of many a spirit. We can gather mental food at will, but the banquet may be solitary. Ah! literature with all its pleasing influences, only whets the soul's desires. From the page that records the ideal of high deeds and requited love, we turn to life for the reality, and what do we find there? "Glimpses that make us less forlorn," but only glimpses. It is awful to reflect that ardour of pursuit may almost incapacitate man for companionships. We may intensify our standard of good until instead of a household fire, it becomes a star that mocks while it allures, far, far above us in the cold sky! I came hither again. Methought the scene could be regarded with equanimity. Often had I trod once more, in fancy, those accustomed walks, and imagined that I looked upon them with serenity—that the beacon of Peace, at last, had superseded that of Hope, so that I should mingle with such influences with an even pulse and a clear eye. No such victory

has been achieved, for the wants of our nature are inalienable. I have been calm indeed, but a sense of isolation, a pang at any incident or allusion, made me aware that the thrall was yet upon me. In this mood I went to the —— theatre. —— played Hamlet. When excited, as in the interview with the queen, my soul found relief—echoing the mournful indignation he breathed; but in the meditative part, his appearance was so mechanical, he seemed so little in earnest, that the impression was lost. To speculate is thought a very cool effort of the mind; but there is such a thing as eager, impassioned speculation; when we turn upon the feeling that overmasters us and question its phases, as the navigator traces on the chart the direction and issue of the current that is bearing him irresistibly onward. Thus mused the prince of Denmark. —— failed to identify himself with this view of the character, but his tones and attitudes were most eloquent of noble passion, when he compared the pictures —“the mildewed ear blasting his wholesome brother,” or keenly watched the king at the play. This actor has vast artificial merit. He represents anger, remorse, pride and valour with success, but is inadequate where pathos or high reflection are at work. I think he lacks sensi-

bility. Without this the finer working of love and sorrow, of thought and conscience, can never be thoroughly appreciated.

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Just returned from P.'s marriage. The circumstances were peculiar, and all present knew them, so every face was grave and not a few tearful. One hears continually from Italians the proverb, "*il matrimonio é la tombe d'amore*;"—not always flippantly uttered, but often seriously announced as a melancholy truth. Few, indeed, can declare of their life-companion with the 'buried majesty of Denmark'—that "their love was of that dignity that it went hand in hand even with the vow once made to her in marriage." Such women as Vittoria Colonna, and the wives of Donne, Roland and Flaxman, would not have become canonized as the saints of Affection's calendar, if they were not lovely exceptions to a general rule. How vast is the difference between the love born of capricious tenderness, and the love fortified by principle and ennobled by graceful sympathies! J—— is very fond of speculating on the subject. To-day he asserted that many a fine woman had contentedly accepted, on the score of expediency, men whom they would have recoiled from with disgust, had the appeal been

made to their highest feelings. This is true. Every one who is conscious of a soul, cherishes a divine element within, which can never be shared with any human being on light grounds. The greater part even of what are called happy marriages, are consummated only in the vestibule of the heart. To the mass, perhaps, this is an unconscious evil; but refined and elevated natures lose thereby all rich development. When we regard marriage in the light of a comfortable social institution—"a sheltered citizenship," as it has been quaintly called, it is easy to believe that the safest connections are those with which the parties have least to do.

"Our indiscretion sometimes serve us well,  
When our deep plots so pall."

Washington, whose wisdom was remarkable, used to say that there would be more happy matches if unions were arbitrarily ordained by the chancellor. In Russia a particular day in the year is set apart, when the maidens of a certain class repair to the public gardens in their best attire, to meet the young mechanics, for mutual inspection. They are accompanied by their parents. In this summary manner are wives and husbands chosen; and as large a harvest of domestic felicity accrues as if more time were employed in the process. J——, who is a determined celibate, always cites with great

unction the selfish argument of old Burton :  
 " Wedding is wedding ; marrying marrying.  
 It is like those birds who fed about a cage, and  
 so long as they could fly away at their pleasure,  
 liked well of it ; but when taken and might  
 not get loose, though they had the same meat,  
 pined away and would not eat. It is a hin-  
 derance to all good enterprizes—' he hath mar-  
 ried a wife and cannot come.' Consider withal  
 how heavenly a single man is. He hath none  
 to control him, is tied to no residence. How  
 well he is entertained, how heartily he is wel-  
 come to all his friends. He shall be invited,  
 and have advocates to plead his cause for no-  
 thing." H—— quoted the concise statement  
 of an old dramatist, who thus significantly dis-  
 poses of the question :

*Duch.* What do you think of marriage ?

*Anto.* I take it as those who deny purgatory,  
 It locally contains a heaven or hell,  
 There is no third place in it.

" How delightful," exclaims a female writer,  
 " to love at once with the mind and the heart !"  
 Petrarch ascribes to Laura the productiveness of  
 his mind :

S'alcum bel frutto.

Nasce di me, da voi vien prima il seme,  
 In per me son quasi un terreno asciutto,  
 Colto da voi ; e'l pregio e vostro in tutto.

Nor is it requisite that the beloved should be an Aspasia thus to inspire. It is enough if there is that sustained moral beauty, that harmony and elevation, that delicacy and truth, which awakens reverence while it wins affection. The domestic sweetness of Lady Hesketh imparting confidence to the unhappy bard of Olney, is no less an example of womanly power than the queenly energy of Zenobia and Isabella, or the holy fortitude of Mary Stuart. The negative excellencies of the sex are highly efficient in this regard. Hazlitt acutely observes that—"grace in woman, has more effect than beauty. We sometimes see a certain fine self-possession and habitual voluptuousness of character, which reposes on its own sensations and derives pleasure from all around it, that is more irresistible than any other attraction."

I was reminded of this idea on my late excursion, for I never saw blandness of expression equal to that which rested on the face of a pretty *contadina* on board the Como boat. The weather was favourable for ascending the lake. I wasted four days at Milan in hopes of securing a companion, and finally set out alone to view one of the most fairy scenes in all Italy. The clear water, the cloudless sky, the variegated shores, though far less picturesque and bold than

the Hudson, formed together a most beautiful scene. Yet in spite of the novel charms of the landscape, I could not keep my eyes from that sweet peasant girl five minutes together. The sparkling wine of Asti was circulated. A group of Swiss travellers entertained every one with their adventures. We were constantly in view of delightful nooks, which Nature and Art united to form into miniature Edens. The house of Pliny, the villa of Pasta, and other interesting localities were successively passed, with ardent recognition. The exclamations of my fellow tourists as we rounded some verdant knoll, or came suddenly in view of a terrace-garden, fixed my attention momentarily upon the shore, but no sooner had we glided by, than I resumed as covertly as possible my former occupation. She was seated on a low bench. Her dress was of homely material, but very gay in colour. Enormous silver knobs gleamed amid the raven folds of her hair. A gold necklace and embroidered mantilla of snowy whiteness indicated that she was returning from a festival. Her complexion was of that rich brown induced by exposure to the sun, her eyes lustrous, dark and soft, and her mouth sweetly expressive. But there was an innocent serenity in her face, a look of guilelessness and peace, as

if the child's spirit yet brooded over the woman's heart, that thrilled the spectator with pleasure ; and when an old gentleman pointed out the promontory which forms the opening scene of the *Promessi Sposi*, I could not but identify this rural queen with Manzoni's heroine.

Long after she left the boat, I mused upon the passive virtues. Methinks they are strangely under-rated, particularly in women. There is excitement enough in the revolutions of the seasons, and in the vicissitudes of life for an active mind and a sensitive heart. To such how needful is serenity ! Wasting, perverting to such, is association with quick and impassioned beings who fever instead of meeting their sympathies. Physiologists say that the law of love is that similar minds and opposite temperatures attract each other. There is a kind of moral incest. There are beings unallied by blood but too kindred in soul to love happily. Attachment may spring up in wild emotion, but when recognized and confirmed it becomes calm through its very fulness.

“ The gods approve  
The depth and not the tumult of the soul.”

One who has often experienced a climax of feeling when health and self-possession have been



thus invaded, naturally shrinks from emotion which cannot fail to produce a terrible reaction, and is attracted by gentleness and truth more healthfully than by brilliancy and fervour. That a warrior like Othello, whose life had been one of constant and exciting adventure, should love such a woman as Desdemona, is most natural. There was a delicious solace, a beautiful repose in such an object. And how appropriate that a melancholy, speculative mind, a nature all sensibility, refinement and thought like Hamlet's, should find a nucleus in the pure, delicate and trustful Ophelia! What though a gifted man is never quite comprehended by her he loves? Where she cannot sympathize, she can venerate, and he can ever look into her love-beaming eyes and exclaim—"Give all thou canst and let me dream the rest."

I dined with Marcus to-day. He is so cheerful and at the same time unobtrusive, that his companionship seldom fails to put me into a very common-sense and pleasant humour. I was rejoicing at this result when we separated, and finding there were two hours of daylight, turned into Valpi's saloon. What variable creatures we are! How true is what Byron says about the "electric chain wherewith we're darkly bound!" I gazed listlessly upon a series

of Dutch pictures, broad-faced wenches, kettles whose brass linings glistened as if just scrubbed, though a hundred years old at least, inimitable brooms, groups of smokers, with cheeks glowing by candle-light, all the paraphernalia of still life, correct, graphic, almost palpable. These literal transcripts of ordinary subjects please from their very exactitude. They make us realize that the picturesque exists in the familiar, and insinuate a sense of comfort which is far from undesirable even in Art. Like Goldsmith's essays, they, in a manner, reconcile us to life by exhibiting its humours and easy phases. From such common place associations, I was startled by the sight of a Magdalen by Fra Bartolomeo. Tenderness, grief, and beauty were surprisingly combined in this picture. I looked upon it until the language it breathed penetrated my heart. Female loveliness is never so captivating as when sorrow renders it meek, or innocence deeply content. Then it does not so much dazzle as plead. The fine outline or delicate feature appeal to the imagination, but when to these a pensive or artless expression is added, feeling as well as admiration is at once enlisted. I tried long, but in vain to analyze the spell which this sweetly mournful face exerted. A tender and stirring reminiscence, a sense of bereave-

ment, an indescribable longing, a vague and melancholy presentiment affected me. Is there not in the soul a chord which vibrates to the centre of being, when the most lovely and the most painful ideas, when beauty and anguish are thus at once presented? These old painters must have been love-inspired. As they reverted to their youth, a few heavenly memories warmed their imaginations, but over these rested the shadows of grief, sometimes of remorse. From such mingled inspirations arose their best creations. Would that —— had been near! Sublime pity was then at work in my bosom. I could have spoken worthily. The hand and the contour of the cheek in this painting were like her's. Was it fancy, or have I not seen her more than once look forth with the same sad eyes? In her manner has there not sometimes been a strange thoughtfulness?

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“We have no need to invent, Bernard; Nature romances it out for us.” This remark, which occurs in one of Elia's inimitable letters, was illustrated this morning. Before daylight, Martini, after a hasty knock at the door, rushed into my room, his face all in a glow, the perspiration standing in large drops on his forehead, and an expression of impatient grief about the

eyes and mouth which quite transformed him. I have been in the habit of seeing this handsome youth regularly at the Count's. He fell in with us at M——, and was a very assiduous gallant, and by no means a disagreeable fellow-traveller. To me he was always courteous, but never very affectionate. I was quite surprised, therefore, to hear the eloquent professions of regard with which he opened our conference. After many assurances of this kind, he appealed to me with great solemnity, to answer frankly a question he intended to ask; and then fixing his dark, piercing eye upon my face, bade me tell him if from my observation I had not inferred his betrothal to A——? I could not speak for a minute or two from astonishment; and when I did answer him, it was with an absolute and emphatic negative. He then began to pace the chamber, indulging in an impassioned strain, sometimes of grief, and sometimes of rage. We finally went out, and in a few moments were in the country. It seems poor Martini thought, to use his own words, that he had but to put forth his hand and snatch the wreath; last evening he discovered the feeling with which he was regarded to be merely fraternal. Hence his despair. I have persuaded him to return to M——. In the midst of his harangue he called me a philo-

sopher, a native of a colder clime, one who could not understand the emotions of an Italian ! So judge the superficial. As we walked together, his wild gestures and excited air were indeed in striking contrast with my outward serenity. How little did he know what passed in my heart ! The volcanic sentiment of the Italian gradually died away. I left him with a joke on his lip and a pinch of snuff between his fingers, the picture of buoyant life. Self-control, at least its outward law, is seldom comprehended by these impetuous spirits. They do not realize that "the angel of martyrdom is brother to the angel of victory." There is an enthusiasm which is intrinsically animal, born wholly of temperament. Is it not proverbially fleeting ? What a slight impression do the ardent words of a sanguine man make upon us, compared to that induced by the language of those who both think and feel, whose souls breathe a concentrated and profoundly sincere emotion ! Give me the "iron hand with the velvet glove ;" the deep and not the babbling stream ;—

"The gentle wishes long subdued,  
Subdued and cherished long."



## CHAPTER V.

**T**HIS country, like every other, has its prosaic aspects. Garlic and mendicity, filthy staircases and cold ungarnished apartments bring one's imaginings to a severe test. There is, too, a certain narrowness of mind and petty species of action, an effeminacy of thought, and undistinguished selfishness observable in social life, which is the reverse of all that is manly and elevated. Such characteristics naturally result from poverty and despotism. Even a foreigner is in danger of being dwarfed in spirit as well as enervated in soul. If of Saxon origin, he will be struck with the rarity of comprehensive views, of expanded opinion and magnanimity. Taste is the redeeming trait of the modern Italian intellect. Yet this is greatly perverted. The *literati* discuss etymologies and contest for years a worthless antiquarian question, or

some unimportant detail of literature, great thinkers do not abound. The motives that operate freely are temporary. All this is unpoetical. On the other hand, the minor graces of social life and the latent pleasures of existence are richly developed. It is something to a being whose daily happiness is made up of small aggregate pleasures, to have the talent and sensibility which convert the veriest trifles into sources of enjoyment. Driven from the arena of vast and inspiring interests, the Italians of the present day are forced to concentrate their affections, to cultivate the nooks into which their sympathies are thrust. Accordingly they live in the present moment to a remarkable degree, and have the art of embellishing, with the flowers of sentiment and imagination, hours which to an American are but dull intervals in the eager game of trade or ambition. They amuse themselves between the acts of an opera by discovering resemblances between a stranger of the multitude and their friends. They love to compare attributes with each other, and mutually unfold fanciful impressions of men and things. I think an individual is more interesting, furnishes more points of observation, and awakens more distinct feeling than in colder and more busy countries. This arises partly

from the leisure which gives more scope to social intercourse in Italy ; but in a degree, also, from the keener sympathies of the people. They have very definite shades of regard toward their acquaintance, and are instinctively metaphysical in their perceptions. You can scarcely drive one of them from the entrenchments of amiable judgment. They seize even upon a solitary attraction of character or person and hold it up as a shield for the disagreeable *tout ensemble*. What an infinity of adjectives their language possesses to indicate human qualities ! It must be a hard case, indeed, where some approving or endearing term cannot be justly applied. There is a charm in the agreeable to which no one is wholly insensible ; and when it is cultivated from natural goodness of heart, the angles of life are rounded, and the irritation of the heart allayed. Honour to those who thus cheer our daily path, and especially to woman ! It is her especial vocation, and, as far as manner is concerned, most enchantingly is it fulfilled in these southern lands. The accent, the gesture, the smile enliven and solace. Why analyze the spell ? Why gravely weigh the motive ? Is it not a more blessed thing to feel the sun than “reason why it shines ?” At home, it is very common among what are called re-



finer people, to tell an invalid how ill he looks, as if that would improve his appearance. The chance is equal that the first person you encounter in your morning walk, will, with an infernal politeness, serve up, by way of information, some discouraging idea or bitter truth which will oppress you all day. Here they go on the wiser principle of making every one feel content.

If these by-way ministries are so efficient, there is no little cant in the protests we hear every day against what is called the laziness of imaginative beings. They, as well as the practical, were created for specific ends. The results of their lives cannot be told in bricks and mortar, ledgers and tax-bills; and are often very inadequately represented in what are called their "works." Let the memory of social delights, of high communion, of earnest sympathy—let the heart of friendship and the mind of power—the fireside their presence made brighter—the haunt of nature their interpretation clad with new beauty—the thought—the sentiment—the grief to which they came nearer than anything but prayer—let these say if they lived in vain! What is termed "idleness," is properly their element. People with vacant minds cannot exist without bustle. It

is necessary to make them feel alive. Their sense of existence is probably dormant, except when sharp contact with the external electrifies their energies. What harm do the dreamers do them? They are not in the way. Fond of repose, as they doubtless are, they turn from the thoroughfare to think. You seldom find them impeding the highway. Activity hath her full range despite of them. A few thoughtful spectators do not lessen the interest of life's drama or interfere with the players. Indeed it is good for the balance of society that there should be lookers-on. It requires a clear conscience to be idle. Half mankind are busy to drown remorse. We never associate perpetual motion with angels. The *dolce far niente* cannot be gracefully enacted without genius. It is an art "caviare to the general." I looked over a file of American newspapers, at the reading-room to-day, and was led into this train of thought by the contrast between those "maps of busy life" and the quietude around.

"A man's best things are nearest him,  
Lie close about his feet,  
It is the distant and the dim  
That we are fick to greet."

As I read this verse I thought of poor Ger-

trude —— ! Thy peculiar charm was evenness. Ever the same, a kind of blest security, a serene permanence was thine. Unruffled as an inland lake at midsummer noon, was thy aspect. It melted into tenderness, or expanded gently at the call of mirth, but a certain quietude and self-content was thy essential quality. The waves of passion grew calm before thee, and selfish anxiety was silently reprov'd. With thee I felt the truth uttered by the bard of Paradise—"they also serve who only stand and wait." Eager pursuit, vain desire appeared unholy, and life's aim and duty comprised in Wolsey's admonition, "Be just and fear not." Like a grateful recipient thou didst stand without doubt or dread, bowing voiceless to the tempest of sorrow, and looking with subdued and grateful trust into the face of joy ! How often have I turned wearily, with a kind of fevered restlessness, from some brilliant specimen of the sex, to find repose and placid happiness in the presence of thy meek and quiet beauty ! Oh, it is a sad token of perversity that such as thou receive but passing homage. Because no salient points, no bewitching arts, no bright artillery of wit or manner press thy sweet graces into notice, are they the less real ? Is it nothing that the blushes of maiden inno-

cence still make holy thy countenance? Is it nothing that the unaffected right-mindedness of childhood has survived commerce with the world's people?—that the simplicity of an inexperienced girl lives in the bosom of the woman?—that the crystal truth of thy infant years has lingered like the smile of God, around thee yet? It is a great error to suppose that the most valuable perceptions are intellectual. There is an insight which moral sympathies and instincts only give. How often did the impulses of thy gentle nature furnish the best key to character! A wisdom philosophy cannot equal is vouchsafed to the true:

“ I do not like thee, Doctor Fell,  
The reason why, I cannot tell.”

The guileless are not unarmed. Every shadow is reflected on the white marble of the portico to the temple of virtue, so that no hypocrite can glide in unseen. Thus did the pure dictates of thy feelings ever interpret the right, and thy delicate sense of goodness warn thee of its opposite. By thy side I felt as when before one of Raphael's Madonnas, or when looking into clear waters, or musing amid the long Summer twilight. A holy and calm joy was upon me. In appreciating thee I grew

better, and felt that "of such are the kingdom of heaven." Thy hair ever parted so meekly above thy modest brow—thy mild eyes, in which the peace of approving conscience seemed to slumber—thy round and delicate cheeks upon which the tinge of shame or the flush of anger never rested—thy sweet lip curved ever with a smile of content and affection—thy quiet dress, a simple black or white robe, neat and modest as thyself—all form a picture upon which I love to dwell. Especially does it rise before me when I behold one as fair or fairer, who lives only for admiration ; or turn with a pang from the fatal union of beauty and deceit. Then thy memory hallows the name of woman and redeems it from contempt. Then genius seems a baneful gift, since it can so basely minister to vanity, and the universality of attraction which wins suffrages for the *belle* dwindles to a mocking trifle before the latent graces of the woman. Thou wert one to whom trust could cling ; thy beauty was the true exponent of thy soul ; the light that thou didst shed on my lonely path was star-like, not meteoric. Around thee, as around a Parian column, might the fancy cluster, vine-like, and every hue glow in bright relief from its unfulfilled surface. Like a lily of the valley, or a violet, in unpretending

sweetness didst thou live. No scene of excitement, no arena for display, no supply of compliments were necessary for thee. Affection hallowed by duty was the aliment of thy spirit. Beauty seemed held by thee in the grateful rectitude of a lowly mind. As a child plucks a flower by the way-side as a meek offering to the being he loves, unconscious of any merit, free from all complacency, pleased only to be the agent of pleasure—so thy loveliness never induced pride, the desire of conquest, or the assumption of conceit. In all humility didst thou wear “the gift of beauty”—never “fatal” to thee, for it was enshrined on the altar of Benevolence, and guarded by the angel of Truth!

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Many of the personal effects of Napoleon came into his mother's possession. At her decease they were distributed among his family. One of them has recently become needy, and this morning as I was inspecting some works of art in a pawnbroker's shop, he took me aside, and displayed the emperor's coronation mantle—deposited there in pledge by his brother. So much for glory! I threw the gorgeous cloak over my shoulder, but no Mesmeric virtue lingered in its folds to remind one of the awe its wearer once inspired. There is this essential

difference between love and ambition. The former is a sentiment which may be religiously cherished, and its issues are mainly dependent on individual loyalty; the latter is a thing of accident, and ever subject to the sway of Fortune. There is something, too, very ennobling in love, absolutely dis severed from ambition. The perfection of the idea would be to meet a being in some isolated region far from one's familiar associations, and to weave the bond of sympathy without any knowledge of outward condition, and in ignorance, if possible, of each other's previous history. The test would then be real. No conventional motive or personal interest would mar the entireness of the feeling. It is this which renders the love scene in the Tempest so fascinating. Ferdinand only asks Miranda's name that he may "set it in his prayers." Fiction has often taken advantage of this notion, by opposing immense difficulties to the lover's wishes, and making it necessary for the object of his affections to live in seclusion or disguise. There is a sacred privacy in all deep sentiment, and the imagination is gratified, even when great misfortunes promote this end. A beautiful legend is that of the cave of Hoonga. When invasion threatened the isle with destruction, one of the natives carried his bride to a

cavern, only accessible by diving, far below the surface of the ocean. In that retreat, he gathered all that could adorn and cheer her solitude, and she knew not of time and her fellow creatures, save through his report. In circumstances like these, all vanity is superseded. Love is thrown wholly upon itself; and if actual, it will not only subsist without extraneous aid, but, day by day, become more earnest and real.

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She thinks K—— of an inconstant nature, because he talks and walks with various women. How often is this done to dissipate an unfortunate preference! If there be any point on which K—— is thoroughly conscientious, it is in matters of sentiment. Herein does he implicitly obey his heart. Dalliance with the uncongenial only gives pleasure to the vain. To a superficial observer nothing is often more unintelligible than the conduct of a man of genuine feeling. He is known, for instance, to have been intimate, from time to time, with a goodly number of the sex. It is thence rashly inferred, that he has said the same things, and borne himself alike to all; whereas, in each case, the kind of feeling elicited, has been wholly distinct. Far more just would it be in the observer to exclaim—



How will he love, when the rich golden shaft  
Has killed the flock of all affections else  
That live in him!

Toward one he has been drawn by mere intellectual sympathy; another he has had it in his power essentially to aid, and she has awakened benevolence alone; while a third has a well-established claim upon his allegiance by the bond of a calm and recognized friendship. In none of these instances has there existed the prevailing tenderness, that sweet and earnest self-absorption which constitutes love. Persons of shallow feeling may find it very difficult to define their attachments. It is otherwise with the deep heart. When that is given up, and its devotion truly reciprocated, there is manifest a quite peculiar and exclusive relation. Then breaks from the lips the confession of Ferdinand:

“For several virtues I have loved several women,—  
Never one with so full soul, but some defect in her  
Did quarrel with the noblest grace she had,  
And put it to the foil;”—

Never one till now! now that I feel myself at home where I have been heretofore a stranger—now that I feel that “content so absolute,” that made the Moor long for death—now that love confirms itself, and no hesitancy or remorse

profanes the consecration that has been delayed only that it might be perfect ! There is a vast deal of cant about loving but once. Romeo's imaginary passion for Rosaline only served to make him aware of the capacity and needs of his affections. It was the vestibule which conducted him to the temple. He lingered there entranced awhile, but the moment a glimpse was afforded him of the sublime interior beyond, he passed onward with exultant tenderness.

As we discover resemblances of face and character which make new acquaintance appear like old friends, so a single attribute in another often deludes us into believing in false prophets. The needs of the soul induce us sometimes to mistake the shadow for the substance, and the victims of "blind contact and the strong necessity of loving," are as numerous as sands on the sea-shore. Our higher instincts, if obeyed, will seasonably emancipate us from such fatal error, but not without suffering the imputation of fickleness. It is our better nature, not indecision of character, which thus forbids us "to drive liking to the name of love." Yet why should any but the devotees of vanity be disloyal ? They stake nothing but a passing gratification, and can afford to trifle ; but the rubicon of love once crossed, the wants of the

heart once acknowledged, the slumber of deep affections once broken, only imbecility or madness can tamper with so vital an interest. Then we crave repose! We have grown utterly weary of the "weight of chance desires," and shrink from "unchartered freedom," as from a solitary dungeon. Chastened by trial, revealed to ourselves by experience, we pray only for a reality, an echo to our highest song, a mirror for our most individual thought, a serene haven for our restless affections.





## CHAPTER VI.

**I**T is now midnight. All is quiet at last. They—the broken-hearted, have retired. God comfort them ! In the adjoining room, he lies dead. The white drapery betrays the now rigid outlines of that beautiful form. I am now the sole occupant of the room which has often echoed with his silvery laugh—the now desolate scene of so many happy hours, of which he seemed the pure and consecrated genius. His little story-book is yet open on the table. The dove which I so loved to see nestling in his golden hair, broods with a low, melancholy note from her resting-place in the folds of the window-curtain. The river, swelled by the autumnal rains, sounds hoarsely as it rushes by, amid the gloomy stillness. All is arranged for the quiet of the household. Early this morning, a slip of paper was brought me, on which were

hastily written these words : — “ Come soon, if you would see our dear —— alive.” I recognized the Colonel’s hand, and flew hither. Everything was in confusion. The handsome face of the peasant nurse was bathed in tears. Dr. ——’s benevolent features wore a most anxious expression. Colonel H—— was beside himself with grief. Little Carlo was in the last stage of a brain-fever. At the head of his couch, motionless and pale as a statue, sat the lady Harriet. The child spoke wildly, but in a strain of melting earnestness. Snatches of his mother’s songs, phrases of endearment, the names of his friends, a thousand affecting thoughts broke from his parched lips. Hour after hour we alternated between hope and fear ; and it seemed an age while I waited the result in an adjoining room. Just as the vesper-bells were ringing, and the crimson sunset played upon the walls, the door opened, and the Colonel led his wife through the apartment to the opposite chamber. I never saw on living face such an expression of exalted despair. I took her hand and remained silent. “ Carlo is an angel,” she murmured, and passed on. In an hour I was called to her side. There was a supernatural calmness in her air. Not a sigh or tear gave evidence of emotion. They had bound a white

handkerchief upon her brow, over which her neglected tresses fell. Her eyes were upraised and fixed. As she sat thus, supported by pillows, the pity that agitated me was hushed in awe. I knew that her religious sentiments were akin to those of the disciples of Swedenborg; if it was communion with the dead that gave the sublime elevation to her aspect in that bitter hour, her faith must have been indeed a blessed reality. The father's sorrow found a more healthful vent. I have conversed long with him, and succeeded in inducing a more acquiescent state. B——, the celebrated sculptor, came this evening at my request. Under his supervision, casts of the face and limbs have been taken, from which a statue will be executed. The benign and gifted artist, paused abruptly on entering the room, and exclaimed, "*Come bella!*" With tears, he bade me remark that the hands had stiffened into lines of beauty. How mature the face is grown! It is as if death conducted the child at once to manhood, and stamped life's essential revelations in a moment upon the soul. My sympathies are all enlisted. Love and Death! Are ye so akin? Do ye not interpret one another? Carlo was the sunbeam of this dwelling, and his departure is withering. Yet when I think from how much his sensitive na-

ture is for ever rescued, I cannot but rejoice. He has known only a mother's love, which is indeed real and divine ; and from its holy atmosphere he has passed to Heaven. *Felice lui !*

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How well Tasso describes a lover ! *Brama affai, spera poco, e nulla chiede.* The most agreeable men are those whose talents have free play, because their hopes are subdued. Carlyle says, "that life begins with renunciation." In how many respects this is true ! P—— is the favourite of the sex. Why ? Because he has long since renounced all faith in them. In early youth he gave up his soul to dreams of love. He believed, he trusted, he fondly adored, and he was betrayed ! Too noble to be a misanthrope, of too genial sympathies to turn scornfully from life, he relinquished as a cherished vision the most glorious of life's promises. His chivalry no disappointment can blight, his appreciation of the beautiful is part of his nature. Accordingly, he is ever ready to counsel, to cheer, to amuse, to befriend, to fulfil all gentle and manly offices, and in the words of the apostle, "To help these women." He enjoys their society as he does a new play, only a more human interest invests it. He contemplates a lovely eye as he does a star, with a like wonder-

ing pleasure, and a like absence of any feeling of appropriation. He looks with delight upon rich, flowing tresses, but it is with the same vague enjoyment that he watches a fountain in the moonlight. He would as soon think of plunging into the one, as suffering the other to entrap in its flexible web, the heart that beats calmly in his bosom. He loves to see smiles play upon the face of beauty, and equally is it his pastime to behold lights and shadows alternate on a forest walk. Thus the present never confuses him with "thoughts too deep for tears." Quietly he can look on the drama of life; pleasantly can he discourse of passing things, or speculate in fancy's realm, he has inexhaustible kindness for women, he holds in reverence his mother's memory, he is a most excellent gentleman, scholar, companion, friend—all but lover.

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For several hours this morning, we clambered about the rocky crags of a deserted quarry. The atmosphere was very clear, the sky without a cloud; an impressive stillness brooded over the scene. Leaving our horses at the convent below, we followed a venerable Franciscan up the winding stairs which are cut in the face of the cliff. I do not remember a more picturesque view on



so narrow a scale. Huge excavations have laid open the masses of stone ; here is a high niche, there a short gallery ; on one side beetles a precipice of solid granite, and at a little distance a lofty, perpendicular wall bounds the sight. Over these irregular heaps of alternate stone and rubbish, spreads a luxuriant vegetation, reminding the spectator of the ruins of Central America. Fig-trees waved above our heads. The fragrance of the orange and thyme embalmed the air. Vines mantled the scattered fragments with a rich drapery, and every breeze showered almond blossoms in our path. Through a tressel-work of ivy, we caught glimpses of deep caverns. Amid the interstices and at the base of the quarry, innumerable flowering shrubs exhibited their gay colours. Our guide occasionally paused to bid us observe the marks of tools which, in many instances, were singularly fresh. We could not but people in imagination the lonely scene, with a toilsome multitude. Forms like the celebrated statue called the Knife-grinder, seemed to crouch in stern endurance beneath some minion of tyranny ; while the clink of hammers, the cries of authority and pain, and the monotonous clank of labour mingled in sad concert. As we looked upon the vivid green and the gnarled roots that in the

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lapse of years had gathered over the rocks, I could almost fancy that Nature thus strove to hide, with her beautiful robes, the memorials of human wretchedness. Yet it was not easy to reconcile the quiet beauty of the present, with the dark records of the past. The softness and calm of the day breathed only of tranquillity and peace. A benevolent courtesy was visible in every glance and movement of the old friar. When we had reached the lowest plain, and looked through the jagged opening to the blue sky, and around upon the mosses and lichens, he led us beneath a gloomy archway, and lighted a taper. In a deep tone and eloquent language, he then narrated the particulars of a duel which occurred several years before. The parties were attached to the American navy, and being officers of secondary rank, had, with difficulty, escaped the watchful eyes of their comrades, and stole away from the ship, then anchored in the vicinity, to effect their purpose. The youngest, a man of rare accomplishments, fell. The old monk held the light against the wall, and with the sleeve of his coarse robe, wiped the mould from a marble tablet, on which was recorded his name and age. — was greatly impressed with this romantic spot. We gathered some rich speci-

mens for her herbal. How delightful it is to minister to such simple tastes! A flower actually gives her more pleasure than a splendid piece of furniture, or a rare jewel affords the majority of her sex. Then her trust is so beautiful. I think it is in Wallenstein, that in a moment of ill-humour, the hero scornfully describes women as the "unreasoning sex." Is not this, after all, their peculiar grace? It is enough that men are obliged to dissect, weigh, and reflect? This everlasting process of analysis—to consider for ever—how wearisome! What a "bundle of prejudices" does it make of us! The very want of sustained thought, the very rapidity of perception, the vagueness and versatility of a woman's mind is refreshing to him whose daily life calls for steady and sometimes profound thought. Contact with minds more delicate and lightsome, cheers like the air of mountains. I feel, as I wander with —, as if under hallowed guidance. I abandon myself with child-like trust to Nature. The restless, investigating spirit of Reason, dies away, and in its place springs up a faith in good, a meek, confiding, grateful mood. I rejoice that something of her capacity to adapt self to the exigencies of the moment, to derive pleasure from seeming trifles, and to give free play to

fancy, is imparted to me. Thus do we often "fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden age." Yet levity is far from both. Our converse is often thoughtful. The truth is, what is most serious in human nature is akin to what is most buoyant. Look at the hero of Austerlitz, the Emperor of France, the august exile of St. Helena, pinching the ears of fair ladies, or entering with zest into the romp of a child. Rich, not peculiar endowments, are desirable. The same Hamlet that speculated profoundly whether "to be or not to be," seems to have been a delectable fellow at college, and was as apt when quizzing old Polonius, or practising with the sword, or when pouring forth his soul in lofty self-communion. One of ——'s rare characteristics is her universality. She has broad sympathies, yet they are quite apart from her love. She is sincere both when she bounds along the green sward and when she kneels at her devotions. Blithely as an innocent child rings her laugh in an hour of merriment, and earnestly as a spirit, communes she with the deep things of life, at the twilight-hour. Genius ought not to be restricted to mental gifts; there is a genius of character, a divine blending of the attributes of the soul, which is as sweet a marvel as genius. That "the ele-

ments were so mixed in him" was the great praise of Brutus. The German phrase, many-sided, is very applicable to some women, and when principle forms the basis of such characters, they are, indeed, Creation's master-pieces.

Gleanings of superstition visit, I believe, all sensitive minds, nor are they incompatible with sense. It is folly to encourage or yield to them, but utterly to disavow such visitations betrays a lamentable absence of ideality. When indulging such a vein in regard to women, D—— was declaring this morning, that a certain spirit or genius of the sex held a peculiar relation to every man of sentiment. He grew up amid the cold proprieties and formalized rationality of New-England. In the country he was sometimes beguiled by a specimen of the almost spiritual beauty (too often the indication of premature death,) which so generally awakens the interest of foreigners; the clear, light eye, transparent skin, lips of vivid red, and rich brown tresses—the Saxon loveliness made ethereal and fairy-like by a colder clime, and a less hearty *regime*. But from boyhood, he was peculiarly susceptible to the influence of manner, and the frequent reserve and calm self-possession of these delicate creatures, rendered him in a certain degree, insensible to their

charms. He was fascinated in their presence, but when alone, the image memory presented was too often like those which Art has consecrated. Seldom came back upon him a moving tone, an act of graceful tenderness, a look of earnest feeling, and the spell was thus easily dissolved. At length he fell in with a fashionable girl, in whose veins there was a tropical element. She had slight pretensions to beauty, but there was a glow, a frankness, an *abandon*, in her manner and a bright freedom in her thoughts, that came upon his soul like sunbeams. In contrast with manners that had so long repulsed his sympathies, this artless and enthusiastic bearing refreshed and bewildered him. Circumstances at the time, made love seem madness, and except as a dream which gave no colouring to their intercourse, it was never suffered to mar a perfectly unimpassioned confidence. But the intimacy was a revelation. Henceforth he looked only to the descendants of Southern families, to the "dark eye in woman"—the raven tress, the unconstrained vivacity or ardent fancy, the fresh, spirited, warm-hearted brunette, for inspiration. This prepossession was confirmed abroad. By no other class of women was the "electric chain," so often struck. A romantic interest has more

than once been aroused by such attractions, which it has required all his resolution to subdue. He has been conscious of a theory that these daughters of the South—for they are scattered over the world by the vicissitudes of birth—fir as no other of their sex can, the fountains of poetry. It is not merely that such characteristics are linked with association of Italy and Spain, but in their very nature, an idea is conveyed of something deeper, wilder, richer. He associates with blondes, the idea of English households and domestic happiness. With brunettes, he cannot but mingle a feeling of destiny. Expression in all its changefulness, its thrilling language, its wondrous fascination often sleeps in such faces, like lightning in the cloud. What fearful joy to watch its fitful play, its gleams of tenderness, its magnificent disdain, its winsome sparkle, its bright inquiry, its “infinite variety!” Of such a one even in death it was said—

“She looks like sleep,  
As she would catch another Antony  
In her strong toil of grace.”

Something of this partiality is doubtless ascribable to his Northern extraction. We are said to love our contraries, and the admiration with

which the Italians gaze on auburn locks and blue eyes confirms the notion.

I was reminded of these ideas which D—— has frequently expressed to me, by a letter just received from him on the eve of his departure for India, announcing the rupture of his engagement with the beautiful L——. I cannot help quoting a part, it is so eloquent :

“I am calm at last. This blank leaf must serve me as a confessional. Alas! that to no mortal ear but thine, can I freely unburthen my soul!

“There are sorrows  
Where, of necessity, the soul must be  
Its own support.”

Alas, that as yet, I am not tranquil enough for prayer! How imagination besets us! Is life indeed “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing?” She does not, cannot, with all her fancifulness, dream of what revolutions of thought and feeling she has been the cause. If my name is associated in her mind with a single idea of a personal character, it is simply as one of a hundred temporary captives—nothing more.

“O, be these juggling friends no more believed,  
That palter with us in a double sense,  
That keep the word of promise to the ear,  
And break it to the *hope*.”



I am angry with myself as I write. What a fool and "peasant slave am I"—thus to substitute dreaming for action, speculation for experiment! It is my fate. Can it be that my views of love transcend possibility? I will not believe it. There can be no course more truthful, more accordant with our better nature, with the holiness of love itself—than that a man should content himself with a frank and free and kindly unveiling of his nature to the view of her he loves. If there be any real affinity, mutual recognition must ensue. Gifts, flatteries, formal attentions, offers, engagements, marriages—ye are but hollow mockeries in comparison with love; ye were far from the thoughts of a devoted soul. Society at last, indeed, demands that such considerations be entertained; but when they are thrust forward into the sanctuary of new-born sentiment, love is profaned. It is true I have professed little. I trembled to drag from their holy depths the pearls of my soul. I only strove to be true, patient, genial, and waited for a sign—a glimmering of dawn. I am satisfied she knew that my interest was genuine. Had the relation between our spirits existed, as I fondly imagined, such a consciousness would have sufficed. But—no! I am again the dupe of an ardent fancy, a restless heart. It

was a figment of the brain. I must banish it. Yet, how desolate grows my soul in parting for ever with so blest an illusion. For ever? Oh, God! inscrutable are thy ways—deprive me not utterly of faith; let me not be wholly self-distrustful: grant me still to feel that these baffled hopes are solemn pledges of eternal recompense! Surely if human life is so guarded by thy providence, human love in its most earnest purity, is not abandoned to chance.

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What enigmas are we to each other! “How self-possessed and happy you were to-night!” said A——, as we left the party. “I never heard you talk so well before. Your faculties seemed under rare command, and there was a subdued enthusiasm in all you said that I quite envied—it was so manly, attractive and calm.” And all this time I was enduring such a war between head and heart, inclination and self-respect, feeling and duty! I never saw her so radiant. I never more clearly discerned her faults, and at the same time I never felt such pleading tenderness quiver in my veins. Her indifference made her almost sublime in my eyes. That one could be the object and the cause of such emotion and yet be so tranquil, seemed supernatural. I spoke in careless tones. I bore myself like a friendly acquaintance, for prying

eyes were upon me. Cold inquisition would fain have noted some external sign. I could not bear it. I nerved myself to the task, and even A—— was deceived. And she—Oh, I cannot, will not blame her. We are unjust to brilliant women. Their social instincts, amiability, and not unworthy ambition to please, make them habitually, undesignedly, agreeable. They often appear to coquette, when unconsciously acting a natural part. I am convinced simplicity itself is often mistaken by the worldly-wise for art. She has only as yet, an intellectual perception of the deep things of the soul. Is it a delusion of mine, that there is a vast, undeveloped and priceless mine of sentiment in her bosom? Does not my spirit incline to her's as the divining rod bows over the buried treasure? Is it mere fancy that makes me tremble for her destiny and recognize elements of profound interest sleeping under the guise of child-like grace and winsome brilliancy? Could I bend over her slumbers, and breathe a blessing into her soul—could I implant a single principle of truth or beauty in her character—could I minister to her fortune or her peace, methinks I should learn to be content. But thus to have felt, thus to feel—to leave her as I found her, to regard it all as a chimera, a mockery,—how bitter!”



## CHAPTER VII.

**M**Y host is a teacher of music, overflowing with urbanity. It is delightful to hear him converse. He is a Roman by birth, but has lived twenty years in Tuscany. In him one sees exemplified the perfection of the Italian, according to the old proverb—*la lingua Toscana in bocca Romana*. Sometimes he enters my apartment, guitar in hand, and sings my favourite airs, but I see him infrequently. He occupies a distinct part of the house, which is remarkably quiet. A dark palace wall bounds the view from my windows. The street below is quite cheerful. I like to see the peasants go by on the way to market, and hear the small feet of their donkeys patter on the broad flag-stones. How delightful are the associations which variety of costume suggests! A Dominican in his white robes just passed; several military officers are grouped

under the arch opposite ; there comes a lovely group of English children, and the wild looking German who is gazing at them with such admiration is undoubtedly an artist. How plaintively sounds the chorus of that funeral procession from the adjacent square ! I never saw objects appear in such clearly defined relief as in this atmosphere. The cornice of the palace, time-tinged as it is, has a fresh, clear outline, as if just executed ; and that massive church—what an impressive and hallowed aspect it wears ! If I did not thus look from my watch-tower occasionally, life would grow too dream-like. When I ring in the morning, the old *serva* comes in with an armful of faggots and a mellifluous greeting. She gossips as she lights the fire and prepares breakfast, retires with a graceful obeisance or cheerful story, and I am left alone, to read, write letters, or muse. Soon after noon, unless some book or thought has made me oblivious of time, I go forth. Along the river beneath the venerable chestnut trees, when the air is soft, how delightful to wander ! The clouds, as they cluster themselves at the swaying of the wind, the low rustle of the branches, the eddying stream, seem invested with the genius of tranquillity. Athletic rowers propel a heavy barge, a sportsman saunters by with his dog,

some rich equipage dashes along the road, a beggar moans from the hedge, or a band of young citizens sing as they stroll; and then all is still again but the low ripple of the water or the murmur of the leaves. I return, and at the city gate am hailed by an acquaintance; we visit a gallery or church, discuss what we see there, inquire at the post-office for letters, and then dine together at a *trattoria* on macaroni, chickens, fruit, and wine. We are joined by others, and it is unanimously agreed to adjourn to the *café*. There we glance at the journals, sip the fragrant beverage, smoke, and hear the news of the day canvassed by men of all ages and tongues. Night has fallen. We separate to pay visits or go to the opera. The moon rises. On the gloomy structures of the middle ages, on a statue or fountain, dome or cypress grove, her beams fall richly. I involuntarily turn from my homeward path, and walk toward the bridge. A sentry's tramp echoes through the deserted area. The idea of sleep seems impertinent. The freedom, the repose of this existence penetrates the heart. A thirst for something true and beautiful, something in life to harmonize with the external peace, takes possession of the soul. The desire for great deeds, for earnest love, glows in the heart.

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P——, clever as he is, seems an inveterate disciple of that material philosophy—that Frenchified way of viewing life, at which my Saxon mind and Irish heart indignantly rebel. In our walk to-day he bantered S—— on his love affair, one of the most beautiful in its effects upon character I have ever known.

“This inordinate regard for a woman,” said he, “on the score of her immortal attributes, or human beauty, must be abandoned. The chuck under-the-chin, kindly making-much-of, half-in-earnest and wholly-patronizing air, is the thing after all. Give exalted sentiment to nature and religion, and only familiar and casual affection to woman.”

“Yet,” replied S——, “it is delicious to be Petrarchan. A poetical man would fain let some of his brightest sympathies and deepest thoughts crystalize round a fair mortal. Such natures require a Laura, as well as a domestic friend and companion. The mightiest triumph of sentimental idealism would be to combine the two. What a castle in the air! Well, there is one thing that may be done; love and fear not—let the feeling in me be perfect, though it is ‘to make idols and to find them clay, and to bewail their worship.’”

As S—— thus talked, his air was noble;

and great minds sustain his doctrine. One of the most sensible female writers of the day, a warm advocate for her sex too, recognizes what she calls their "facility of adaptation," as a most desirable characteristic, acknowledges they were born to feel, not to understand, and that the only object of education is to make them feel rightly; and more than intimates that woman is simply an adjunct, absolutely nothing in herself, and created to be lost in others. These admissions occur, however, in the midst of the strongest appeals in favour of the moral superiority and sublime capacities of her sex. Neither are the two propositions incongruous. There is a medium between the faith of the most chivalrous lover, and his who deems sentiment but "a toy in blood." It is possible to love "too well" and "wisely" at the same time.

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"Simplicity of character and a beautiful mouth," said K——, who joined us, "combined with no essential defects in other regards, capture the out-works of my heart at once. Worldly men like P—— talk about living in one's intellectualities and physical comforts. I believe I am not insensible on either score. I know full well the zest of active perceptions, and the solace of a "mild brown" and rocking-



chair after dinner. There are times when the exercise of thought, communion with the gifted, fallies of wit and reveries of imagination, absorb my consciousness in a vivid sense of mental existence. I feel, too, how admirable it is to exercise those powers which are man's high prerogatives—to reason, to explore, to study, to muse; but when I propose to myself a life such as this, and say with the old English bard,

‘ My mind to me a kingdom is ; ’

when I picture my heart laid asleep by the activity of my intellect, a cold and desolate gloom seems to enshroud the world. Books look as stony and inhuman as dungeon walls, lore strikes me as the invention of the devil, and thought a frigid mockery. It is like living alone in a palace of ice, and catching through the cold, transparent medium, glimpses of a white robe among green foliage, or a soft cheek glowing in distant fire-light. The lordly brute, obedient to his animal instincts, the goodly tree unconsciously drinking in the air and sunshine, appear more enviable than man when he becomes an intellectual machine, sufficient unto himself, his sympathies all expended on the abstract, his desire absorbed in ideas, the mere incarnation of thought. Comfort is delightful—

but why? Only because it stills the jar of this mortal prison-house, and oils the human machine. Comfort screens the spirit from its corporeal annoyances. It soothes to rest the uneasy sensations that interfere with the mind's play, and leaves the heart free to enjoy its spontaneous emotions—to revel in its dreams of love. The greatest of absurdities is to propose comfort and mental pleasures as substitutes for feeling." I added, observing P—— serious, "Whoever does so, is self-convicted of gross insensibility. As means whereby diversion may be occasionally attained, they are available; but the soul that can live in them is no soul at all, but a mere apology for one, a sensual approach, an intellectual daguerreotype of a soul. You can see such every day, in the shape of men of pleasure and pedants. They are about as well acquainted with the tastes they scorn as Egyptian mummies are with the steam engine."

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This northward movement is anything but cheering. What a painful sense of mutability it occasions! Is all the series of tender, exciting, and noble associations in which my soul has existed for months henceforth to be a mere dream? The persons, the places, the hopes, fears and pleasures of the past—have they left

no enduring traces, no permanent good? Will the tide of coming life efface them for ever like the indentations on a sandy beach? If so, what an objectless thing is existence! The experiments of the chemist, the elemental revolutions of nature, all contribute to an end. Is human experience alone unprolific? These beautiful episodes of our being—rich in glimpses of love, revelations of truth, teachings of wisdom—so absorbing at the moment, so affecting in remembrance—let me not look upon them as a theatrical pageant, but as links of a mysterious chain, as tributaries of the “immortal sea that brought us hither.” The thought at once chastens regret and breeds courage. We crossed the Alps at a dreary season. Leaving at night-fall the verdant grain-fields and luxuriant plains of the South, dawn found us amid bare and desolate peaks. Masses of snow and rock, ice-bound cliffs, swift-flying clouds, and freezing blasts, afforded rather a discouraging welcome to pilgrims from sunny Italy. I had been recently so accustomed to Nature’s smiles that her frowns proved singularly repulsive. A day upon the Soane to a lonely traveller, fresh from endeared scenes, seems interminable. There was a fresh wind. The flat banks of the river are monotonous; though now and then pleasant country

seats diversified the prospect. The poplar is the most common tree. French soldiers, and peasants with cotton caps and wooden shoes, were grouped on the deck. Steamboats are pretty much the same all the world over—noisy incarnations of modern utility. The one in which we embarked possessed the inconvenience of a moveable funnel that was lowered over our heads as we shot under bridges. I missed the usual conveyance and passed a long, bright Sunday at a provincial town. I wandered through the streets and thought of the past—striving to look into the future with a strong heart. The beauty of life had been recognized under new phases. Its common features had assumed to my mind a sweet and fresh interest. Methought I saw deeper into the hidden resources of time, and felt intensely how the spirit of love and beauty could make the world a scene of genial activity and inexhaustible charms. With a kind of hopeful pride I thought, as I strolled along, that my lot was cast in a free land. With glowing resolution I promised myself to dwell therein unsubdued by its practical spirit. There was little around me to inspire such a mood. Knots of loiterers smoked their pipes at the street-corners—the click of billiards was heard at many a threshold. I entered the

garden of a hospital. An old servitor politely joined me. From him I learned that the establishment dated from the reign of Francis I. Four ranges of apartments radiate from a common centre where stands an altar. Here mass is daily said in view of all the invalids. Sisters of charity in their dark robes glided about. With the sad impression derived from this abode of suffering yet alive, I seated myself in a handsome café. At the desk sat a beautiful woman. Her dress was quite elegant and tasteful, and her hair adjusted with remarkable tact. There was in her demeanor that grace and attraction so characteristic of her nation. The sun lay cheerfully on the pavement. A strolling musician played at the door. It was one of those by-way scenes so often encountered on the continent, which throw a hue of transitory pleasure around the most solitary pilgrimage.

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In writing the above, how little I imagined what an hour would bring forth! A tap at the door caused me to lay aside my pen. I was not surprised to see the affable warden of the hospital with a bunch of flowers in his hand, intended, I imagined, for a polite hint that his courtesy of the morning was deserving of a more substantial recompense than barren thanks. To

my astonishment, instead of presenting the bouquet, he stepped gravely into the room and urged me to accompany him instantly to the bed-side of one of his patients, who was near death, and having caught a glimpse of me while we paused in the central hall, had recognized and was very impatient to see me. I could not call to mind a single individual of my acquaintance who was likely to be an inmate of such an asylum, in this isolated town. My worthy conductor was able to throw but little light upon the subject, and as I mechanically followed his steps, the only plausible explanation I could fancy was that the perturbed senses of the invalid had mistaken me for another. My first glance at his face confirmed this impression. By the light of a massive chandelier swinging from the high ceiling, I beheld an attenuated countenance, fallow and rigid with suffering, which was wholly unfamiliar. The sudden clang of a bell roused him from a feverish doze; his eyes slowly opened, and by degrees as he became aware of my presence, assumed an intelligent and then an unutterably sad expression. I knew at once that peculiar look. It was——! To my hasty condolence and inquiries he answered only by a groan; then turning those flashing orbs restlessly from side to side, as if to

convince himself that we were alone, he pointed to a wine-glass upon the table. I held it to his lips, and he seemed a little refreshed ; but his articulation was hasty and difficult, and it was long before I realized the object of that momentous interview. " Providence sent you here," murmured the wretched creature, " the same providence that in its stern wisdom has thus cut short my career. You wonder to see me here. I have wandered since we parted, indulging to excess a passion for gambling. Disease and want overtook me in this obscure town a month ago. I am dying, and have but one boon to ask of life. For this I have prayed. You surely will not refuse what Heaven seems willing to grant. Do not interrupt me but listen. I never loved ——, the betrothed of your friend —— ! but I had set my heart upon her fortune. I pursued her with all the skill of which I am master. From the first she treated me with indifference. My vanity exaggerated the civility proffered by an old family acquaintance into proofs of an attachment. I was rejected. Believing him the occasion of my disappointment, I was villain enough to have recourse to calumny. Through her English relatives, whom she venerates, I caused intimations fatal to his prospects to reach her. They were so

conveyed as to ensure secrecy and obviate explanation. The plot succeeded. Here is my confession written in detail. It was to have been despatched to-morrow." This was the substance of what —— said. My heart swelled as he spoke, with alternate indignation, pity and joy. I arranged everything for his comfort, and that very night was on my return to ——, on the wings of sympathy.

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From the roof of the famous cathedral in this town, a very extensive prospect is obtained. I ascended at an early hour to-day, and looked forth with delight upon the broad plains and the horizon of mountains—these beautiful ramparts of Nature—which seem at once to bound and protect this garden of the world. I know nothing more refreshing to the eye than the various tints of green which adorn such a landscape at this season. There is the vivid pale hue of the young grain and the deeper shade of the ripe crop, streaked here and there with yellow. The mulberry trees with their light foliage contrast well with the dark and sombre olive. When the breeze sways the branches of the tall poplars a silvery glimmer is visible for a moment, while the herbage of the distant hills looks dim and shadowy as a passing cloud obscures the sun—



shine. Then there were the ever-bright and graceful vine-leaves, and patches of vegetables where every gradation of this universal colour is displayed—all revealed by the clear, strong light of morning. As I was about to quit this enchanting observatory, my glance rested on two figures at a distant angle of the roof, leaning against the balustrade. They proved to be my old friends D——, and Lucretia S. Our surprise, if not our pleasure, at the encounter was mutual. Of all men I have ever known, D—— is the most interesting. No other word expresses the effect of his character. He is very original and independent in his opinions. He is one of that small, glorious class of men who really think for themselves.

\* \* \* \* \*

Names are a very false standard of merit. There are so many artificial processes by which a temporary reputation may be acquired, that every day I grow less astonished at the discovery of obscure genius and unacknowledged virtue. I begin to think the best things in the world are latent; certainly the most beautiful are profaned by notoriety. Through the kindness of a friend I was induced to visit the studio of a sculptor who has achieved so little renown that strangers are not aware of his existence. And

yet I have been more gratified than at the rooms of other famous artists. In fact I was rejoiced to be diverted from the sadness which ——'s recent behaviour had occasioned. To dissemble was impossible. The pain I suffered upon reflecting on all that passed, made me realize what a solemn thing it is to trust one's happiness in another's keeping. I shudder to imagine what long, inconsolable and bitter anguish may accrue from entire abandonment to any object. It is not selfish forethought ; it is not cowardly dread. Outward evil, in its worst form, a manly spirit can bear with graceful fortitude ; but the soul shrinks from the self-perversion, the moral suicide of misplaced devotion. One statue affected me greatly in the midst of my hopeless musings. It represented Venus entering the bath, or rather the sea, for two or three shells were exquisitely carved upon the sloping pedestal. The figure is admirable, and of all the Aphrodites I have ever seen in marble, the face of this struck me as the most lovely. I prefer it in this respect to the chaste divinity of the Tribune and the more voluptuous graces of Canova's. The attitude is modesty personified. I could easily fancy a slight trembling of those snowy limbs, with so coy and sweet a timidity does she ap-

proach the water. Shelley has a fine image comparing some despairing thought to the chill of the waters of oblivion as they strike the feet on life's dreary shore. I thought of this as I looked upon this almost breathing form of the goddess of beauty, thus rendered thrice attractive from the half conscious aspect in which we seem to have surprised her. Madame de Staël says, when we are much attached to our ideas we connect everything to them. There is much truth in this. Methought as I gazed that thus the heart intimately hesitated on the brink of delight, gathering up its cherished hopes, as she her garments, and pausing in awe of the momentous issues. Concentration of feeling is rare. Few can judge of its effects. Ah! Socrates was right in deeming tranquillity the only legitimate good. Raptures belong not to earth. Shall my peace of mind, my very identity be sacrificed? My life-blood I would joyously pour out like rain, for an adequate end; but, the purest essence of my spirit—if it is yielded at all, it must be without measure.

\* \* \* There are times even in this shadowy and fleeting world, when the outward and spiritual elements of life combine to realize the rarest dreams of enthusiasm. Such has been this Spring day! The rain ceased at midnight

and the morning opened warm, crystal and bright. Not only seemed inanimate nature to palpitate with that vitality, but the heart stirred amidst the balm and sunshine as if about to renew itself with higher attributes. A peculiar restlessness infected me. In vain I strove to muse calmly by the open window ; my thoughts were glowing and wild ; neither the page of genius nor the converse of friendship controlled them. I hastened into the free air and it seemed to woo me like the voice of one beloved, and hold me round with the embrace of a boundless tenderness. The crowd, the very sight of human faces, was oppressive. The sounds of every-day life had a singular harshness. The very walls and streets seemed to have acquired a constrained aspect, and to interfere with the freedom of thought. I soon found myself without the gates, and on my way to the villa P——. It is approached through a long avenue of cypresses. The deep emerald hue and the compact foliage of these trees gave them a beautiful relieve effect in the lucid atmosphere. A grove of citrons sheds a delightful fragrance, and the dim, grey leaves of an adjacent olive-garden were silvery and green from the dew. The spacious rooms of the villa were quite deserted. I passed many hours

in viewing the portraits, the rich hangings and vivid marbles, the massive, antique chairs and brilliant frescoes. It was a scene to awaken visions of enjoyment, and at the same time attest its fragility. I could not but indulge the thought how blissfully my existence might pass in such a domain, cheered by the society and hallowed by the love of —— ! So absorbing was my reverie, that I fancied every sound her footstep, and started joyfully at the play of the shadows as if her form was gliding softly by. Every pleasant rhyme that rose to memory seemed uttered by her lips ; every grateful emotion that swelled my heart seemed to find a response in her beaming glance. I went forth upon the terrace, and a sense of her presence and sympathy overflowed my being. The outer circle of hills that bounded the river was white with shelvy ridges of snow, and golden fleecy clouds reposed, like spirits, upon their green declivities. The city occupied the vale, and from its wide mass of dense buildings, the ancient domes and towers rose gracefully. Every tree-top trembled with joy against the blue sky. The vernal breeze was chartered with hope, and the whole was radiant with promise. In that "bridal of the earth and sky," I read delicious auguries.



## CHAPTER VII.

**I** OFTEN dine at the San Luigi—a restaurant much frequented by that snug, quiet race, found in every metropolis, who consider quiet a luxury, and esteem parade unworthy a man of sense. It is a place where the Spectator would have gleaned copious material for his pages; but as I am happily free from the pertinacious curiosity which belongs to the Yankee character, it is only by shreds and patches that any gleanings of observation come to me. A portly officer, with iron-grey hair, is generally seated at the table adjoining mine. It is amusing to see the deliberate air of enjoyment with which he sets about the important function of dining. Doffing his heavy cap as he enters, he gravely salutes the guests who happen to be present. Then he “unclasps the wedded eagles of his belt,” and hangs his sword upon a peg.

The next process is to draw forth a white handkerchief and remove the dust from his uniform, as far as a few very stiff and well-timed flourishes over his shoulders and breast will accomplish the object. A gold snuff-box is then drawn from his pocket and placed upon the table. Having refreshed himself with a pinch of the "titillating dust," he gently pulls a ribbon from under his vest and a very neat eyeglass appears, with which he commences a long survey of the *carte*. Presently a look of determination appears; he opens his *serviette* with a loud *ahem*, and a keen resolute eye is fixed upon the waiter. Guiseppe, who is a kind of Arlechino, who is full of pithy rejoinders and laughable ways, seems instantly magnetized by the soldier's glance. He flies ostentatiously to his side, and "seriously inclines" his ear. The name of the chosen soup is announced with military brevity, and during the minute and a half which elapse before its appearance, the old officer strokes his enormous *moustaches* into order, and tucks them behind his ears; this is the final ceremony. The organ of alimentiveness then begins to act, and it is difficult to imagine a better picture of animal content than succeeds. Quite diverse from this son of Mars is the bearing of a handsome priest who usually

enters the refectory five minutes after. He is tall, and has what Bulwer calls the "manly defect of leanness;" his eyes are large and expressive, and his mouth—which is doubtless the feature that indicates disposition—eloquent of sweetness. The dark robe, the raven curls, the thoughtful brow, and a manner in which high-bred courtesy is subdued by meekness, renders this man no ordinary subject of speculation. He makes you think of Petrarch. I am confident his life has been "stranger than fiction." In the benevolent smile, the frequent reverie, the patience that so ill accords with the warm spirit glowing in the dark eye, there are indescribable tokens of deep experience—something that instantly appeals to the imagination. I have woven a score of romantic destinies around my gentle neighbour, and have been restrained from seeking his acquaintance only by a foolish dislike to risk the surrender of my air-castles. But with another daily visitor of the *Trattoria* I am on very agreeable terms. He is a young Spaniard whose picture, six years since, gained the first prize at the Madrid academy. The consequence was that the promising artist received a pension to enable him to pursue his studies at Rome. He remained there until political difficulties cut off his remittances. He



is an enthusiast, and possesses the true Gil Blas humour—a cheerful reliance on fortune and a strong love of adventure. These were the only traits which he chose to develop for the first few days after a mutual friend had introduced us to each other. On one occasion, however, he was present at a warm discussion between a *coterie* of Americans in regard to the merit of some English poet. Discovering from the part I took in the conversation that the utilitarian principles so much in vogue were anything but genial to my mind, he suffered me at our next meeting to peep into the chambers of his heart. When a boy he conceived the idea of educating a being to understand and love him. At the age of twenty he found himself at Rome, and became acquainted with a venerable optimist of his own profession who resided with his grandchild, a beautiful girl of eleven. Ere long the two painters became ardent friends. The youth revealed his cherished dream to the veteran. Old age in this country is often found in alliance with youthful feeling. It is frequently serene and hopeful. The pursuit of art and a life of content had caused time to deal gently with the old man. A generous warmth yet lingered in his veins, and the sight of beauty had not ceased to thrill him with joy. He

readily lent himself to the young man's views, fitted up an apartment for him in his own house, and there for five years had he been free to guide the tastes and mould the fancies of that lovely child. She is now his betrothed. The artist's eye kindled, and his frame dilated as he dwelt upon the gifts and graces of his beloved; and there was as much acuteness as enthusiasm in his vindication of the singular course he had pursued and the romantic visions he cherished. The high poetic faith of his love has had the noblest influence upon his genius. Conceptions such as his can only have their birth in a romantic temper. Life would yield no such glowing impression to a spirit which exalted affection had not quickened. Certainly art and literature owe their richest trophies to that spirit of poetry which the world is apt to regard as folly when applied to life. "To a man of literal and prosaic character," says Channing, "the mind may seem lawless in these workings; but *it obeys a higher law than it transgresses.*"

\* \* \* \* \*

A candid man who loves the sex indicates the feeling unconsciously by the modulation of his voice. It is true the coxcomb essays a lisping softness when playing the agreeable; but

a woman not wholly blinded by vanity, instinctively recognizes sincere devotion by the habitual change of intonation when she is addressed. The heart speaks in such accents. The manly voice that is sustained and firm almost to sternness in argument with a fellow man, grows sweet and earnest when directed to the ear of the gentle creature whose very presence calls forth at the same time both his chivalry and tenderness. Indiscriminate flattery is not their vocation. To the world their faces are passionless, glowing only before what is kindred and dear. They demonstrate that "the violent are weaker than the mild"—that "gentleness is power." Theirs is the calmness of sincerity, the placidity of truth. Such a man is R——. He has known too well the noble satisfaction of sincere interest to find any pleasure in its heartless echo. Like a stream long confined to its subterranean bed, his best feelings gush fountain-like to meet the pure sunshine and blessed air of genial and free communion. To him female society is rather a necessity than a pastime. Burn's "regimen of admiring a fine woman" is a kind of daily bread. Deprived of it, his mind loses healthful activity, his sentiment becomes morbid, his life grows dreary. This is no mystery. The love

of beauty is the master instinct of refined and deep natures. There are times when it is gratified with the sight of the mellow light that quivers in the Autumn forest, or the crystal brine expanding into a noble and isle-gemmed bay. In quiescent moods, the details of a painting or the melodious turn of a stanza may soothe its pleadings. But often, very often, nature, with all her varied array of form and hue, and lore, with its countless jewels of exquisite metaphor and winsome language, seem tame and distant. Desire is too earnest, susceptibility too vivid, to be met by the mechanism or hieroglyphics of the beautiful. Something more kindred, more human, is needed. Intellect, imagination and heart, not only demand objects but responses. The sentient alone will give content. "Years that bring the philosophic mind" or satisfied affections, attune the soul to harmony with nature and literature. It is in the pauses of the heart's dreams that we listen; and when the image of one beloved is fixed within, that we calmly gaze on the universe. While seekers we are restless. Woman only—confiding, gifted, fair—can restore for a season the equilibrium of a sensitive mind which the rudeness of life has cast from its happy level. Yesterday, the sky was overcast. The

streets were black with mud and snow. People glided along with fixed and forlorn looks. The coal smoke rose heavily from the chimney stacks. It was a Sabbath in Lent, and all the gay shops were closed, and the saucy voices of street-traders and cheerful stir of week-day life were heard no more. I turned from the musing group clustered around the parlour fire, and looked from the window. Cheerlessly the prospect fell upon my heart. Life seemed a dull and objectless thing. Its machinery stood forth in bold relief. Its better moments came upon the memory as sadly out of place and extravagant. As Hamlet felt that his pure and lofty passion for Ophelia was strangely at variance with a world where a wife could "kill a king and marry with his brother," so arose from this reverie on a wet Sunday morning, the thought of renunciation, as if a man should say pitifully to his soul, "get thee to a nunnery." The day passed heavily on, and as night approached hope revived, as she is wont to do, with the appearance of the stars. I thought of the psalm that says—

The star of the unconquered will—  
 He rises in my breast;  
 Serene and resolute and still,  
 And calm and self-possessed.

I passed the evening with funny and gifted C——, and so renewed existence. R—— came home with me and lies asleep on the sofa, little thinking that I have been journalizing his characteristics.

\* \* \* \* \*

What a change in a few hours ! After traversing a plain which displayed the usual fields of grain, we commenced ascending the mountains, and were amid the Alps. Beneath the moon, how wild, desolate and grand, seemed their bare peaks shooting up to heaven ! As the dawn broke, masses of snow, the utter absence of vegetation, the cold blast and icy wheel-track betokened the complete reign of Winter—and the sun went down to our eyes upon a verdant and balmy landscape ! Such a quick transition of the seasons produces a peculiar and melancholy impression. It brings home and makes intense that vague feeling of vicissitude, that keen sense of the law of change, which more gradual mutations cause us to realize but feebly. The bleak scenery along the heights, creates too, a painful emotion of suspense. It is in approaching the naked elements of nature as in viewing an anatomical museum ; the blest illusions which conceal or sublimate the material, for a while vanish. We are forced

to reflect, and existence loses that unconsciousness in which lies its peace.

\* \* \* \* \*

I feel here in France like a stranger. Entering the country thus from Italy is certainly not fitted to prepossess the traveller. There is little to attract in the prospect; it is not less monotonous than unpicturesque. The vines grow on little stakes instead of being "festooned from tree to tree;" and scarcely any but the poplar is visible. The costume of the peasants is coarse and ungraceful; and their enormous wooden clogs make a forlorn click upon the huge pavements of the dreary provincial towns. There is no little exaggeration in the notions we Americans entertain of "funny France." There are a few charming localities in the south; but one may pass from Havre to Marseilles, and find but occasional cheer such as gratifies his senses in the United States. If one goes rapidly through the country, it can scarcely fail to become associated with the mere mechanical details of life. The language is that of conventionalism. Its tone and phrases seem applicable mainly to etiquette and cookery, and its highest relation is with science. There is something absolutely inappropriate in clothing high thoughts, deep sentiment, or lofty ear-

neftness of feeling in fuch a tongue. It is true, fome of the great preachers, and a few chapters of Lamartine or Chateaubriand, may feem to contravene this idea ; but let any reader of reflection and fenfibility compare the expreffion of the fame emotions as uttered in Englifh or Italian. How petty become Shakespeare's nobleft paffages in French ! Madame de Staël's beft thoughts translate themfelves always in the fymphathizing mind of an Englifh reader into his own language. There is fome rational ground for the prejudice of Alfieri and Coleridge ; for there is an effential difcrepancy between French nature and human nature. We recognize it inftinctively when we fpeak of perfons being Frenchified. They feem to enjoy the material of life rather than its depths. Everything with them is taken *en paffant*. A refined but fuperficial theory is the univerfal faith. There is little individuality, little intensity or concentration ; but vaft talent, wonderful power of adaptation—tact, glibnefs, complacency, animal enthufiasm, *efprit*, wit, life—engaging fpirit—but little foul.

\* \* \* \* \*

We paffed the barrier about dark. The gloomy towers feemed to frown in the twilight. One of my fellow-travellers, as we came in



fight of the Jardin des Plantes, remarked that the palm-tree within its walls had blossomed this year for the first time. The transfer of those lofty children of the desert to the heart of such a metropolis is a striking fact. \* \* \* Paris is France. It is eminently the residence for single men; for the exigencies of life are all provided for, and its luxuries attainable without homes. What an incongruous blending of associations! The boulevards, gardens, restaurants and theatres so accessible and modified according to the wants and means of the vast crowd; where public lectures and locomotive reading-rooms afford ready mental pabulum; and the lamp-posts are still standing upon which victims of the Revolution were hung; and wreaths of *immortels* yet daily placed upon the base of Napoleon's column. The grisette trips winsomely along the street as the funeral car winds by to Père la Chaise. In the *passages*, of a rainy day, one can walk, smoke and observe to his heart's content. I am struck with the truth of some remarks by an acute writer. "The French love their dogs the more they are shabby. A Frenchman is always a mimic, an actor; and all that nonsense which we suffer to go to waste in our country, he economizes for the enjoyment of society. They

have been polite, and continue to live on the credit of their ancestors. They are always fuddled enough with their own animal spirits, and need no rum. The French are hyperbolic; the English not even emphatic." I see very few beautiful women in Paris; but nearly all have charming manners, were it not that they so often appear premeditated and artificial—a mechanical habit rather than a natural language. The Madeline is truly beautiful, especially at certain hours. Its exterior has been exposed to view since my last visit, and took me most agreeably by surprise. I fell in to-day with the following translation from a northern poet—as anti-Gallic a piece of rhyme as the most inveterate hater of Monsieur could desire :

Formed for a race of infidels, and fit  
 To laugh at truth and skepticize in wit,  
 What stammering, sniveling sounds, which scarcely dare  
 Through nasal channels to salute the air!  
 Yet helped by apes' grimaces and the devil  
 Have ruled the world, and ruled the world for evil.

\* \* \* \* \*

The most intelligent and noble people are those who most frequently avow their dissatisfaction with society; and it has been remarked by foreigners, that they have usually encountered their most interesting acquaintances in

America out of the social arena; and hence the oft-repeated inquiry, why those who, by their gifts and intrinsic worth, are best fitted to elevate as well as adorn life, so pertinaciously cling to their own firesides. It certainly does not spring from a want of the sentiment of fellowship, or any morbid self-love, for these very individuals are the most satisfactory associates in the world when met on their own ground. The only rational way of accounting for these phenomena is to be found in the essential barrenness of society itself, in the artificial basis upon which its arrangements are formed, and the petty enjoyments to which it usually ministers. No wise or sincere person long pursues an object which he is convinced is worthless; and the young American of character usually takes a surfeit of social life at the outset, finds it quite vapid compared to the hearty and, perhaps, brilliant companionship of his academic days—and if he has any high aim, or strong personal tastes, falls back upon himself, or his special avocation, and what talent and generosity he possesses is in a great measure lost to his fellow-beings, or visits them only through a professional channel. It is for this reason that the best endowed of our citizens are so one-sided. They adopt a set of opinions, and the

familiar attrition of other and different minds does not subdue their angular and obtrusive influence. One of the chief blessings of society, in its legitimate action, is that it tends to broaden the sympathies of the individual by introducing him to a variety of character, and enabling him to see good under every form of manners and opinions. Withdrawn into a clique, or absorbed in selfish pursuits, there is no generous scope for his mind ; its partial development is a natural result, and he enjoys but a slender prospect of cultivating that fine spirit of humanity, which lends the highest grace to mental power, and the sweetest charm to life. This evil, of which not a few are conscious when habit has made it difficult to change, would not accrue if society had more permanent attractions, if it was more simply organized, and thus made accessible and inviting to men of intellectual activity and noble sympathies.

\* \* \* \* \*

Swedenborg aptly divides love into natural, which yields delights ; rational, which gives satisfaction ; and spiritual, producing blessedness. The ideal actualized is the combination of the three—a result seldom known on earth. Next to a “consummation so devoutly to be wished,” it seems to me, is that relation which supplies

to each individual the elements they respectively need. Let the man of spiritual tendencies find in natural and rational love the balance of his nature, and graft upon the object of his affections that higher sentiment, which would add a crowning and immortal grace to her soul. These distinctions are not fanciful, and I think the evidence of their reality is to be found in the peculiar influence which each attractive woman exerts upon a susceptible man. Nothing can be more unlike than the states of mind and feeling they produce. In one case there is a bewilderment, as if a magic process were going on. The heart is fascinated through the senses, and the will, as it were, spell-bound. In another a quiet pleasure, a sense of completeness, a tranquil content, are the result. This last effect is doubtless the most real and healthful. There is something about it that gives promise of continuance. It is like a native atmosphere, and the very self-possession in which the glad heart is lapped, seems a pledge that it has found a home. True love is content not rapture; and the most ardent and sensitive at last thirsts only for high and sweet repose. Even physiologists recognize this principle of self-founded affinity as opposed to the mere tumult of passion. They explain by dif-

ference of temperaments the mutual attraction ground of mental diversities. If matter is, to the minutest extent, the exponent of mind, physical laws only confirm spiritual. There is a peace born of intercourse based upon this genuine adaptation which gives the faculties the truest play. A ministry is going on, not suggested by caprice, but ordained of Heaven. The relaxed nerves of the being whose sentiment has made life oppressive, grow strong; while the wilful coolness of the creature he loves is softened by his communion, to a graceful tenderness that deepens her consciousness and purifies her heart. It is when such a hopeful issue dawns with prolific joy upon the mind, that one can frankly utter himself, in the language of Steele, "Let us go on making our regards to each other, mutual and unchangeable; that while the world around us is enchanted with the false satisfactions of vagrant desire, our persons may be shrines to each other, sacred to conjugal faith and heavenly society."

I could not sleep without inditing this item of the philosophy of love, for I have experienced its truth. One of the most painful things in the world is to have tenderness excited, unaccompanied by respect,—to love and yet doubt the worth of the object; to struggle against per-

ception, and keep up a kind of special pleading with one's better nature in order to justify its sympathies; to feel obliged to resolve that the claims shall be broken, and be ever tempted to postpone the resolution. In such a state of mind I went to a party at ——'s. Such scenes have little attractions for me, unless I can survey them with a kindred spirit, or find some temporary interest which shall beguile me of their vapid glare. I was introduced to the Countess ——, upon whose face and figure nature had stamped traits of kindly nobleness. In her society I found a serene enjoyment long awakened. My feelings were soothed, not excited. I wished only to inhale the atmosphere of that happy presence, and bear away its inspiration. No brilliancy and little sentiment was discoverable in her mien or language, only cheerfulness, truth and affection. Upon these, methought, might be reared a temple of felicity. Her mouth had the flexible richness that ever indicates feeling; her eyes at times grew deep with sensibility; her utterance was delayed and musical as of a complacent and slumbering heart; her carriage was majestic, but frank and cordial. How opportune for me was the meeting! It gave me an image upon which I could ponder with satisfaction, and

thus encouraged my righteous purpose to forget. I will fall asleep with thee in my thoughts to-night, thou who thus crossed my path like a better angel. I will dwell upon the lofty promise, the high delight of which thou seemest the herald. I will refresh my dazzled vision with thy sweet countenance, as the astronomer turns his weary eyes at dawn from the distant sky-fires, to the green and dewy herbage.







## CHAPTER VIII.

**T**HE day has been sultry beyond any I have experienced. The usually busy streets appeared quite deserted at noon, and a languor, almost death-like in its quietude, seemed to brood over life and nature. Slowly passed the hours as through the closed blinds stole in an occasional breath of the *sirocco* hot with the desert; and the drowsy hum of the locust or the sharp trill of the cicada from the parched herbage of the court-yard came listlessly to the ear. It seemed as if the shades of evening would never descend. I waited not for the last streak of crimson to fade from the sky before I ventured forth, thoroughly weary of the dumb and suffocating loneliness. The arid pavements almost scorched my feet, and a quivering glow seemed to radiate from the heated buildings upon my cheek. Children lay in

heaps about the entrance of the dwellings impatiently waving off the insects that disturbed their slumbers. Here and there through a lattice gleamed a dark eye, or a large fan vibrated slowly. It seemed an age before I reached C——'s dwelling. Our greetings were scarcely uttered before we became silent—looked into each other's faces and smiled, or simultaneously sighed, so completely were all weighed down by the oppressive atmosphere. Darkness had nearly concealed us from each other's view, when C—— started with something of her usual vivacity, and exclaimed "the breeze!" She threw her veil over her head, and in a few moments we were at the water's edge. A boatman sprang up at our approach, and as the wind freshened, a few rapid strokes of his oar brought us into the midst of the bay which glistened all over with the moonbeams. I do not remember to have experienced so quick and delicious a transition. The briny air renewed us at once, and the long repressed spirits rose "as at the touch of an enchanter's wand," C—— sang her best airs, and her rich deep tones seemed to fill the space around, and then come with joyous trembling back into our very hearts. The whole scene—deep blue hills frowning sublimely in the distance—graceful

craft reflected at intervals on the crystal water—a full moon sailing above—so fair and sympathetic a being beside me—the cool breezes and the gushing song, thus greeting the senses and the soul after so many hours of solitary lassitude, combined to awaken pleasurable sensations only to be experienced through contrast, and fully known as are the visits of angels in the lapses of care.

\* \* \* \* \*

When one is deceived in his friendship, or thrown back upon himself by misplaced confidence and unrecognized sympathy, how inclined he is to adopt the resolution of the noble Coriolanus :

I'll never  
Be such a gosling as to obey instinct ; but stand  
As if a man were author of himself,  
And knew no other kin.

Shakespeare shows his wonderful knowledge of the heart by uniting pride and sensibility in his best characters. The former is a shield to the latter, without which the most self-devoted beings would be unarmed and defenceless. I have always observed that self-respect is often allied with a child-like abandonment to those worthy of confidence. From the many only

esteem is desired by high souls ; from the few love.

\* \* \* \* \*

It has been said of Dante that his silence is greater than his speech. Is it not so with all true power in nature and in life ? Why do we so quickly distrust pretensions of any kind ? What eloquence is so touching as that of restrained feeling ? Are not prefaces to books, professions in friendship, and cant in religion deservedly regarded with suspicion ? There is no single trait of greatness so universal as simplicity ; and the more reality there is in character, the greater the impatience at what is conventional. It is not surprising that as this inverse ratio of the genuine to the apparent unfolds itself in our experience, we come to regard the unpretending as the best evidence of the true. I have seen more display of maritime lore and authority in a pleasure boat than on board national ships. Cellini, the greater part of whose works are buttons and vases, outboasted Michael Angelo and Raphael. The modest brevity of Perry's despatches from Lake Erie are as indicative of nobleness as his bravery. Othello announces his suicide with the directness of a warrior, "and smote him thus ;" and the other extreme is richly illustrated by Falstaff's "men in buckram."

Io sprezzo  
 Gente loquace ; ha pochi detti il forte,  
 Molti il codardo.

“The flash that lighteth up a valley amid the dark midnight of a storm, coineth the mind with that scene sharper than fifty summers.”

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There is a deep tranquillity in some parts of this ancient city of Pisa, which affects one strangely. I left the carriage which brought me from Florence on one of the bridges. It was but an hour or two past noon, for we started at daylight. During the greater part of our ride the heavens were overcast, and occasionally the rain fell, but at length the sun broke forth, and his rays glittered on the dripping vine-leaves, and shone amid the flax blossoms like tears in blue eyes—while every olive tree looked fresh, and the heavy stone walls grew darker with the moisture. As I sprang upon the pavement of the bridge, the sweeping curve of palaces on the river's bank, so finely exposed to the sun, rose at once before me, and wholly justified the praises I have so often heard of their situation. Indeed this quarter of the city is an exception to the rest. There is a sunny cheerfulness about it quite in contrast with the narrow and lonely streets on the other side of

the river. I gazed with interest upon the façades of these lofty buildings, and especially upon the palace occupied by Byron and Shelley. Groups of well-dressed people were chatting near the parapet. A few fallow invalids in cloaks were slowly promenading, some of the shops looked gay, and as I stood at the entrance of a book-store, an acquaintance hailed me from within, and introduced me to Roffini the celebrated author, whose historical novels, after the manner of Scott, and learned commentaries on Tasso are well known throughout Italy. He is a large man, with a massive and striking head, thickly covered with grey curly hair, very affable and deservedly popular. We talked about America—the season and things in general. The afternoon, however, was too clear and balmy to be passed within doors, and I soon hastened forth to perambulate the town till dark.

At an angle where the weed-covered walls of the old republic are still visible, stand the Campo Santo, the Baptistry, the Cathedral, and the Leaning Tower in a line; and opposite, separated by the road leading through the adjacent gate to the Cascine, is a large, modern hospital. The three former edifices rise from a plain of green level turf, and seen as I saw

them, on a lonely evening of early Summer, their noble, rich and antiquated forms thus congregated in a deserted and tranquil section of the town, near the beautiful hills and meadows of the vicinity, present an appearance unique and attractive in the highest degree. The earth in the Campo Santo was brought from the Holy Land; and the roofs of its light arcades are covered with frescoes in the earliest style of Italian art. The Duomo is of the Greco-Arabo-Pisano order, built in the eleventh century, in the form of a Latin cross. The Pisans consecrated the plunder taken from the Saracens in 1063, to its erection. The bronze gate reminds one of the Baptistery at Florence, still adorned with the chains taken from the ancient warriors of this republic. The tower was built in 1174. It is one hundred and ninety feet high, and its declination from the perpendicular is thirteen feet. I have seen few landscapes so beautiful as that obtainable from its summit, embracing an extensive series of highly cultivated fields, dotted with villas and skirted by the Apennines, glowing with purple in the sunset, and on the other side the tiled roofs, grey walls and towers of the old city. Not far from the spot is the palace of Ugolino, whose horrible fate is so vividly depicted in the

[Inferno; and from this very observatory Galileo watched the stars. The hollow square of the Campo Santo is surrounded with old sarcophagi and mutilated busts, and paved with inscribed tablets; it is filled with rank weeds and flowers, and at each corner shoots up a solitary cypress. The graceful tracery—the mildewed frescoes—the chirp of a lone bird among the arches—with the long echo of my footsteps—made the scene deeply impressive. Moonlight, however, is the time to feel the inspiration of such a spot. There stand the best collected architectural representations of humanity. The hospital is a type of suffering—the baptistery of birth—the church of prayer—the cemetery of death, and the tower of aspiration. Lovely symbols are they all—hallowed by time and adorned by genius, rising midway between the town and the country—the busy scenes of man, and the serene quietude of nature. As I stood there while twilight came on, I felt as a pilgrim at one of the shrines he has wandered far to behold, and whence he is destined to carry away memories of pensive delight.

The regime under which I am placed with a view to my recovery, prohibits social excitement. Circumstances have thus obliged me



once more to exchange a life of action for one of books ; and in the intervals of reading, their comparative utility has again and again presented itself. It is, indeed, a problem of no slight interest, in an age like this, to decide how far and under what modifications it is well for the individual to be occupied with literature. The habit of constant reading undoubtedly dwarfs as many minds as it stimulates. The most interesting companions we encounter are, by no means those whom acquisitions so derived have enriched ; but rather such as vivid sympathies and reflective observation continually keep awake and progressive. I had a long discussion recently with a man of genius, who has attained an extensive reputation as an author, as to the relative importance of the press and social life as means of influence ; and we soon agreed that while the former is more extensive, the latter is often more real and satisfactory. A writer may divert thousands—but it is by impressing one's individuality through personal intercourse upon single minds—swaying impulses, grafting opinions, exciting sympathy, and moulding the will, and doing all this to a noble end and from disinterested and lofty motives, that gifted beings completely realize themselves. When we look narrowly at books it would seem that

1 they are designed to beguile age and convalescence rather than employ lives. When we through ideality recognize the beautiful around us, what need have we of written poetry? When our own experience teems with absorbing interest—why should we turn to the drama, having ourselves a real and momentous part to enact? When events in our daily existence bear so intimately upon the destinies of the race that they need but the lapse of time to give them the dignity of history—is it not nobler for us to achieve than to record, to be thoughtful spectators of passing events, than the patient students of ancient chronicles? “Writing,” said the Countess Faustina, “is but the surrogate of living;” and at those times when we really do live,

“The rhymes are dazzled from their place,  
And ordered words asunder fly.”

It was the remark of a philosopher of antiquity that he liked a man without letters better than letters without a man. If such an idea had force then, how much more significant is it now that the means and appliances of literature are so diffused that it has become no small part of a wise man's duty to guard himself zealously against the encroachments of the press, that they do not

overlay his very humanity and cause him to read instead of to think, and live altogether in other people's ideas instead of developing truth for himself out of his own thoughts and experience—the only process which will thoroughly invigorate and expand his nature. Lamb used to say that one may lose himself in another man's mind as easily as in another man's grounds; and Hobbes declared that if he had read as much as other men, he should be as ignorant as they. Patrick Henry, whose eloquence has the traditional fame in America that Sheridan's has in England, was a very indifferent student, and when asked whence he derived his ideas, answered that he read men.

There is doubtless such a thing as an art of reading, if we could but seize upon and apply its principles. The chief of these, I believe, is obedience to our permanent instincts; for only that which is genial to any mind assimilates with it; and nothing can be more absurd than forced reading. The only advantage it pretends to is discipline, and this may be obtained by less costly means than the sacrifice involved in associating books only with restraint and task-work. After all chance reading appears to be the most effective. "It was," says Scott, speaking of Percy's Reliques, "beneath a huge plantain

tree, in the ruins of what had been intended for an old-fashioned arbor, that I read these volumes. Nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently or with half the enthusiasm." It is curious to notice the taste of distinguished men in reading. Napoleon loved Ossian, and Paul Jones, Thomson's Seasons. Probably the greatest advantage of books is indirect, and therefore more likely to be realized by desultory than formal readers. Scholars are too much given to the technicalities of literature, to seize readily upon its spirit, which is often more desirable than the former. Men of experience, heroes, philosophers, and poets—they who are practised in observation, apt in reasoning upon facts, and quick to feel impressions, are the best readers, because they recognize clearly what accords with or grows out of what they have seen, and have the power of abandoning themselves to the very inspiration which originally moved the author to express himself. Such were the readers that Sterne desired so ardently. "I would go fifty miles on foot," he says, "to kiss the hand of that man whose generous heart will give up the reins of his imagination into his author's hands, be pleased he knows not why and cares not wherefore." We of the North, make reading like everything else in life, too

much of a study, and become abstract from a too marked division of grave and cheerful employments. It is very pleasing to the stranger to see so many complacent old gentlemen reading the journals under the trees in cities abroad ; the monk intent upon his breviary as dawn struggles through the windows of the travelling carriage, and quiet figures musing over some favourite poet in retired nooks of public gardens. Books are admirable subjects of conversation, and the manner in which they affect tastes strikingly indicates character. Johnson approved " books you could carry to the fire ;" a species quite unknown at the period of folios to which Crabbe alludes :—

Princes and kings received the ponderous gift,  
And ladies read the work they could not lift.

When we are tired of a book we can lay it by, or exchange it for another, and this it is which makes books the most convenient friends. It is delightful to meet readers who are free from intolerance, who are in regard to literature what Allston confesses himself to be in regard to art ; " wide likers," and share the catholic taste of the humorous essayist who declared that Shaftesbury was not too fine for him nor Tom Jones too low. A slavish reader is as unendurable as

an illiberal one. Caliban satirizes the class when he says of Prospero :—

Remember  
First to possess his books; for without them  
He's but a sot as I am, and hath not  
One spirit to command.

Old Montaigne combined rarely habits of study with those of observation, and on this account his views of reading are not without authority. “ ’Tis the best vaticum,” he says, “ I have yet found upon this human journey; and yet I rather accept of any sort of diversion, how light soever, because this can never fail me. The study of books is a languishing and feeble notion, whereas conference teaches and exercises at once. Of the experience I have of myself, I find enough to make me wise, if I were but a good scholar. I had rather *forge* my soul than *furnish* it.” The Ettrick Shepherd was doubtless of the same opinion, for he declares in the Noctes, “ I hae no great leebrary, peck o’t consists o’ twenty volumes o’ my ain writing; but, oh! man, it is sweet to sit down, on a calm Summer evening, on a bit knowe by the loch side, and let ane’s mind gang dandering awa down the pages o’ some volume of genius, creating thochts along with the author, till, at

last you dinna weel ken whilk o' you made the best."

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Had a very pleasant interview with Sismondi. He is wholly unaffected, simple in his costume and taste, and of a truly benevolent temper. He told me that his life was so methodized that he seldom experienced any ill effect from mental labour. A certain part of the year he devoted to arranging and collecting materials for his works; another portion to writing, and a third to travelling. Each day was equally devoted to study, exercise and social intercourse. The latter seems his chief pleasure. I have never seen an author so devoid of egotism. His frank and quiet manner and sensible discourse were delightful.

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Let me not dwell longer on these disappointments, bitter, keen, overwhelming as they are. Rather will I destroy the record and let time do his perfect work, as I trust and believe he will; so that henceforth what was despair shall grow into mild regret, and what is darkly mysterious become intelligible.

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After long deprivation, how unspeakably grateful is sleep! Well did honest Sancho pro-

nounce a benediction on its inventor, and say that it wraps one all about like a cloak. "It seldom visits sorrow; when it doth it is as comforter." There is refreshment in the very words in Ion,—

I have drawn  
From the selectest fountain of repose,  
A blessed calm.

\* \* \* \* \*

I confess that superstition, unless in a very degraded form, is not so repulsive to me as irreverence, or an entire disregard to the feelings of others. Yesterday there was a procession here in honour of St. Agatha. An American officer went coolly up, and lighted his cigar at one of the tapers borne before the host. He attempted to justify the procedure on the ground of the scene being a heartless mummary. To many of the spectators, however, it was evidently sacred; and to all with refined senses or a particle of sensibility, there was a solemn pathos in the music—the white figures and holy effigies. I once heard a distinguished pulpit orator, endeavouring to clear away the difficulties of faith, exclaim to his audience, "Whatever to you appears holy, be that to you religion!" Is there any other religion to the individual?



The abuses of the monastic system have been repeatedly exposed, and to the eye of a republican the most hateful objects in Europe are soldiers and priests. I must confess that my prejudices against the latter have been modified by agreeable personal associations. I read Italian at —, with a simple-hearted old man, whose unobtrusive demeanour and kindness of heart accorded well with his clerical garb. His professional duty was confined to saying mass at a little church just outside of one of the gates of the town, for which he received two pauls a day. At ten o'clock he came into the city and went to the English reading-room to look over the French journals, for the one little peg upon which hung his small modicum of self-esteem, was a conceit of political insight. He was always predicting the downfall of Louis Philippe, and amusing himself with the short-sighted policy of his holiness at Rome. Having gleaned the material of his day's discourse, the old man laid by his spectacles and went forth to give an hour to each of his few pupils, reading with them Goldoni and Ariosto, and interspersing the lesson with sundry exclamations of encouragement and anecdotes of life in his country, with occasional political digressions. At vespers he returned to his humble domicile to dine, took

his evening walk on the promenade, and then repaired to a little café to play a game of checkers with one of his brethren. Such had been his life for two score years, and he was the image of contentment. I was surprised one morning at Palermo by a visit from a Franciscan monk, who, not content with offering some fine olives and figs—the produce of his convent garden—insisted upon claiming me as a countryman. There was certainly nothing American in the coarse brown robe, hempen girdle, and shaven crown and long beard of the friar; but his familiarity with New York localities soon convinced me that his pretensions were authentic. His story was, that while engaged in the trade of a mason, he fell from a high scaffolding, and was so much injured as to be confined for months to the hospital. He there read a life of St. Francis, and vowed if he recovered, to join his fraternity. In accordance with this resolution he had come hither several years since, and seemed to feel no degradation in roaming the streets of the Sicilian capital with a sack instead of a hod, although he confessed that the sight of the American flag in the harbour sometimes awoke strong yearnings. Padre Pascal, the head of the Armenian convent at Venice, was one of the most delightful *cicerones*

I ever met, and justified Lord Byron's partiality. One of the handsomest men I ever saw was a young Dominican who was my companion for a week on a journey to Rome ; and can I readily forget the learned and gentlemanly abbé who introduced me to Silvio Pellico ? Father Ambrose, a venerable priest, revered for his sanctity, used to stand at the street corners at Florence and bless little children. It was a beautiful sight. Who does not feel a kind of affection for Sterne's monk ? Are not the friar who befriended Juliet and the one who vindicated Hero to be gratefully remembered ?  
*Pax vobiscum.*





## CHAPTER IX.

**I** HAVE passed this long, balmy forenoon delightfully—reading Hawthorne. How considerate in Boston to send these winsome volumes to refresh my exile! I remember when I first encountered one of his sketches in a Boston annual, I thought Hawthorne was an assumed name quaintly devised for an Elia-ish incognito; and it struck me as quite appropriate, for is not hawthorn the favourite hedge, and is not its very mention suggestive of verdure, home and a cheering wayside? I know not how long I remained under this delusion, but being accustomed to haunt the Athenæum, I would sometimes look up from my book and speculate upon the silent figures around me in the reading-room. I cannot affirm that there was often anything in them upon which imagination might complacently repose; neither did their habitual

attitudes emulate the graces of Praxiteles. They were chiefly retired merchants who dozed or mumbled over the newspapers, and whose physiognomies betokened Mammon's votaries :

Across whose brain scarce dares to creep  
Aught but Thrift's parent pair—to get, to keep.

There was occasionally, indeed, a sprinkling of professional youths whose fees were inadequate to their office rents, and whose leisurely movements betokened a hopeless ignorance of patients or clients. Sometimes, too, a well-to-do physician, with that air of self-esteem consequent upon being a domestic necessity to sundry prosperous families, would step rapidly in, whip in hand, and stand a few moments at the table carelessly glancing at an English review ; or a popular divine would ensconce himself in an arm-chair and very snugly gloat over Hook's jokes or Blackwood's sneers, peering ever and anon about, to assure himself he was unobserved by any prying member of "our parish." Into this heterogeneous assembly I more than once observed a personage glide with a very unobtrusive step, and a certain gentle self-withdrawal of bearing that awakened in my breast a vague sympathy. His figure was completely enveloped in a cloak—the high cape almost

concealing his features. He walked, as I have said, very modestly in, seated himself noiselessly by the table, drew a magazine towards him, and leaning his head with a kind of subdued content above it, seemed to read like a man who could fold an author's thoughts up in his own with an affectionate patience. He never looked around. There was a harmonized quietude in his position. In fact he wore that aspect which makes one of lively sympathies instinctively say, "A penny for your thoughts"—only there was that about him which repelled all idle curiosity. You felt there was a rich human sweetness in the silent oracle that forbade untimely interrogation, but if it were to breathe spontaneously could not but "discourse most excellent music." Repose of manner is not common among us, and to an observant mind its rarity makes it very welcome. It betokens inward resources. Perhaps this is why it is deemed characteristic of a gentleman—as one whose position secures him from that eagerness of outward aim that marks the demeanour of the vulgar. There is something that whispers of faith, too, in repose. We are apt, and with justice, to imagine that a quiet conscience, a satisfied affection, or a serene trust, thus diffuses calmness over the pilgrim of life. I saw a dark and lustrous eye gleam from under

my quiet neighbour's hat, and knew thereby that his was not the tranquillity of a stagnant or indifferent spirit. One day, for the first time, I saw him acknowledge, by a slight inclination, the greeting of a friend of mine as he left the reading-room. I hastily followed, and inquired the name of the unknown. It was Hawthorne, and thus those dreamy sketches that had charmed me in the annuals as they gracefully reposed, like Goldsmith's memory, under the hawthorn "for whispering lovers made,"—became associated with my gentle mystery of the Athenæum.

What I admire in this writer's genius is his felicity in the use of common materials. It is very difficult to give an imaginative scope to a scene or a topic which familiarity has robbed of illusion. It is by the association of ideas—by the halo of remembrance and the magic of love—that an object usually presents itself to the mind under fanciful relations. From a foreign country our native spot becomes picturesque; and from the hill of manhood the valley of youth appears romantic; but this is a peculiar and rare mental alchymy which can transmute the dross of the common and the immediate into gold. Yet so doth Hawthorne. His "Old Apple Dealer" yet sits by the old South Church, and "The Willey House" is inscribed every

summer-day by the penknives of ambitious cits. He is able to illustrate, by his rich invention, places and themes that are before our very eyes and in our daily speech. His fancy is as free of wing at the North-end, or on Salem turnpike, as that of other poets in the Vale of Cashmere, or amid the Isles of Greece. He does not seem to feel the necessity of distance either of time or space to realize his enchantments. He has succeeded in attaching an ethereal interest to home subjects, which is no small triumph. Somewhat of that poetic charm which Wilson has thrown over Scottish life in his "Lights and Shadows," and Irving over English, in his "Sketch Book," and Lamb over Metropolitan in his "Elia," has Hawthorne cast around New England, and his tales here and there blend, as it were, the traits which endear these authors. His best efforts, I think, are those in which the human predominates. Ingenuity and moral significance are finely displayed, it is true, in his allegories; but sometimes they are coldly fanciful, and do not win the sympathies as in those instances where the play of the heart relieves the dim workings of the abstract and supernatural. Hawthorne, like all individualities, must be read in the appropriate mood. This secret of appreciation is now understood



as regards Wordsworth. It is due to all genuine authors. To many whose mental aliment has been exciting and coarse, the delicacy, meek beauties, and calm spirit of these writings will but gradually unfold themselves; but those capable of placing themselves in relation with Hawthorne will discover a native genius for which to be grateful and proud, and a brother whom to know is to love. He certainly has done much to obviate the reproach which a philosophical writer, not without reason, has cast upon our authors, when he asserts their object to be to astonish rather than please.

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I find myself again surrounded by the quietude of Nature. For weeks this change has been anticipated with no little ardour, and yet I am not disappointed in the result. My sense of the beautiful in scenery is not at all diminished. Not a breath of the pure and cool air is lost upon my senses, not a step on the green and elastic turf is otherwise than grateful; and as I watched the sun set a few hours ago, the fields of rosy light that glowed in the sky, the gorgeous masses of cloud, the long pencilled lines and their reflection in the water seemed to me as lovely and significant as in the days that are past, when I watched them from the Adriatic bay

and the Apennines, and at the close of a fine autumn in my native land. Nor do I with less sincerity acknowledge the tranquil spell of the night now hovering, like a benign presence, around me. The stars are as mysterious as ever, and there is the same uprising of the spirit beneath their solemn fires. My perceptions are as vivid, but external nature does not fill and absorb my soul. I cannot readily lose my consciousness in her embrace. There is something in this silence which makes more audible the latent voices of my heart. My destiny is more palpably revealed; and as fire brings out the characters written with invisible ink, so in this seclusion and outward calm, the inscriptions within declare themselves in glowing characters. Much genuine poetry has been inspired by a love of nature, and insensibility to her charms is a defect to be lamented; yet it is not always that we can place ourselves in relation with such influences. The mind was created for activity, the sympathies must be enlivened, and rural life, except when sought for occasional repose, is inimical to necessities like these. In Switzerland and the most charming parts of Southern Europe, the inhabitants manifest but little enjoyment of the beautiful landscapes around them. It is the stranger by whom they are ex-

explored with enthusiasm. I have observed more narrowness and egotism among country people than in citizens. Even Wordsworth's sublime philosophy is one-sided. His mind is not sympathetic. To no eye are the meadows so delightful as to that weary with gazing upon the procession of faces that line the streets of a metropolis; upon no ear does the murmur of foliage come so refreshingly as to the one upon which the din of a crowd has just died away. It is through contrast and not habit that

To him who in the love of Nature  
Holds communion with her visible forms,  
She speaks a varied language.

The most important aliment of human life is social. An individual if nobly endowed, exerts a far greater influence than a scene. The mountains and the ocean inspire feelings which can only be realized in the world; and the sequestered valley and eloquent stream breathe images of happiness that become actual only through fellowship. There is no little cant in the popular idea of making nature and humanity antagonists. They are like the positive and negative principles in electricity, and mutually illustrate and confirm each other. The beauty and order, the calm and refreshment which Nature brings

are intended to occasionally cheer, but never permanently satisfy.

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The good want power, but to weep barren tears ;  
 The powerful goodness want ; worse need for them.  
 The wise want love, and those who love want wisdom ;  
 And all best things are thus confused to ill.

Rather disconsolate, but how true ! I have had interviews to-day with two reformers—a physician and a divine—each in the van of his profession ; the one tracing nearly all social evil to violation of the natural laws, the other to irreligion. They enthusiastically advocate systems, and yet, it seems to me, fail to meet the exigencies of the case. The question is whether it be possible to reconcile physical and moral requirements with the existent social order. Abstract truth and human nature appear to be antagonists ; outward well-being and spiritual good—prosperity and disinterestedness—the sincere and the expedient are at perpetual war. Those who encounter such problems are generally in a wrong position to embrace their entire relations. When we turn from their eloquent generalizations to some fact or individual, how barren seem the theories they consider infallible !

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How pleasant it is to receive letters, especially

when the chirography is associated with friendliness and enjoyment! So I thought this morning as I broke the seal of one from W——. He dates from London. "I see plainly here," he says, "the two extremes of the social system, and *only* the extremes—plethoric wealth in most ungracious contrast with squalid poverty, England is a paradise for the rich, and a purgatory—not to use a warmer epithet—for the poor. The aristocracy revel in surroundings of hereditary splendour, and grudge a refuge for the famished in the shape of union work-houses. The cottage homes of England, of which Mrs. Hemans sang, no longer exist. A rainy, cold Sunday and the *débris* of a headache that has persecuted me for the last twenty-four hours, have kept me in the solitude of my lodgings—(L—— is on a visit in another part of this great Babylon—) and I turn to my letters. Among them is yours. Every word opens the flood-gates of memory. I think especially of that last joyous feast at ——, when poetry, wit and music flung their triple radiance over us. I must bestow a page of friendship's tediousness upon you. This inkshed has done me good already." And so the gifted and loving fellow goes on, Methinks I grasp his hand across the sea.

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What hours of mental agony may human creatures endure of which not even their intimates are conscious—betrayed only by a somewhat paler complexion, subdued manner, or drooping eye! It is wonderful how the soul can wrestle with destiny and make no sign. There is a world of silent endurance of which few observers dream. The will, pride, delicacy, a fear of causing useless pain to others, a kind of magnanimous pleasure in bearing what must be borne alone—all nerve and isolate the spirit. How genial then seems the epitaph that so haunted Byron's fancy—*Implora pace!*

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There was an awful conflagration last night, and not until long after noon to-day were the flames even partially extinguished. A thousand rumours of the amount of individual losses, of the heroic efforts of the firemen, of lives sacrificed, fortunes annihilated, and of affecting and dramatic incidents are afloat in the city. Soon after sunset P—— and myself found ourselves as usual at C's residence. She had passed many successive hours in nervous trepidation, doubtful of our safety. There was now a reaction in her feelings, and she insisted, in spite of our remonstrance, upon visiting the scene of destruction. We rode to the nearest patrol and offer-

ing the card of the commandant, were allowed to proceed; making our way with no little difficulty over bales of goods, reeking water-pipes, heaps of cinders and crushed furniture, until we reached a building of stone which remained entire. Borrowing a lantern from the watchman we ascended through a suffocating atmosphere to the roof. What a spectacle! Immense chimney-stacks rose, here and there, from a vast plain heaped with smouldering ruins, like so many towers and obelisks. Huge flames darted up from deep cellars like volcanoes, and an immense canopy of smoke hung motionless over all. Here and there was revealed the bright uniform of a military guard, but silence and gloom lay brooding all around. In the opposite direction the moonbeams fell serenely upon dome, steeple and quiet roof; vessels appeared at anchor in the silver and tranquil bay, forming a picture of safety and repose. We gazed long and earnestly from our observatory upon the contrasted scenes. They irresistibly impelled us to reflection, as if a chart of destiny or a solemn vision suddenly unfolded. C—— looked like a sibyl as her noble form was relieved against the sky. Her quick imagination was instantly kindled, and the sense of danger to which she had at first yielded gave way to a

kind of hushed enthusiasm. She compared the two prospects to heaven and hell—love and fate—hope and despair, and a thousand other antagonisms.

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I met L——, our gentlemanly consul, early this morning, on his way to the harbour. He had received notice that an American man-of-war was in the offing. As we approached the pier, a gallant frigate “fwirled into the bay” beneath a glorious sky and in the presence of a concourse of lookers-on. We sprang into a boat, and by the time her anchor was dropped were alongside. The official visit was rather tardily announced, and the consequence was that just as one of the lieutenants ushered us into the commander’s cabin, the salute commenced and the deafening jar of the reports somewhat interrupted our mutual greetings. When the uproar had ceased, however, we had a delightful interview. It seems to me impossible for one to realize the true glow of national pride or affection, until he is thus brought in contact with some noble evidence of his country’s power in a foreign land. There is a class of well-meaning philanthropists who rail against the expenses of navy and army, and doubtless there is rational ground for their complaints.



But I am convinced that one of our national ships—so majestic a symbol of human enterprise, with her strict discipline, beauty of model and brave officers—by her mere presence in distant seas, produces a moral impression as salutary in its indirect effect as it is captivating to the fancy. As I sat with the manly and courteous commander with the insignia of my distant country all around, and talked of her political condition, with the shores of the Mediterranean in the richest beauty visible from the stern windows, I felt a consciousness of home-ties and responsibilities at once dignified and sweet. The show of authority is indispensable in the world; and if the peace-makers did but know it, one of the surest preventives of war. The marked superiority of position which the American citizen enjoys abroad is owing, in no small measure, to these gallant representatives of his native land, which have inspired foreigners with a sense of her strength and chivalry. The cry of aristocracy is ignorantly raised against the army and navy; and yet it is difficult to imagine a field more equally open to merit. No man worthy the name is justified in looking with envy upon any distinction founded in nature. Such, by the very laws of being, will and should assert themselves; and the genius of our institu-

tion attempts not to supersede, but only affords them scope. As means of rearing a race of gentlemen (which nothing in our social system as in other countries absolutely secures)—they should be respected and cherished.

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All human beings, in proportion to the intensity and breadth of their characters, lead two lives ;—parallel, intercommunicating, yet distinct ;—the one outward, mechanical, a life of routine, duty and habit ; the other inward, conscious and personal. Since —— left here, how have I learned to realize these separate existences ! Calm and methodical, apparently occupied with the business of the hour, faithful to each social demand, I have all the while felt as if only a passive actor in an indifferent scene. My doings and sayings have had less reality to myself than the sound of the Ave Maria, the odours from the lemon grove, the shadow on the terrace, the play of the sunset breeze or the hues of the firmament—because these are so much more intimately associated with my genuine feelings than the men and women, the gossip and ceremony around me. It may be a purely fanciful idea, but such influences, borne from the life of nature, utter a kind of sympathy,

flatter the imagination, and whisper sweet memories and glorious hopes :

Since thy departure I am grown so wife  
 That no pulse stirs at what the hours may bring ;  
 A calm recipient with averted eyes  
 I stand beside Time's ever gushing spring :  
 For now thy love has crowned me, far apart  
 My spirit nestles—guarded by a light,  
 That like Correggio's angels floods the heart  
 With sacred loneliness and tender might :  
 And since thy face no more with daily joy  
 Fills my rapt vision—waking fond surmise,  
 Nor thy melodious voice from all annoy  
 Lures by sweet questions or serene replies—  
 My life, like Imogen's, no thoughts sustain  
 But of the jewel I may see again.\*

---

\* Not comforted to live  
 But that there is this jewel in the world  
 That I may see again. *Cymbeline.*

THE END.

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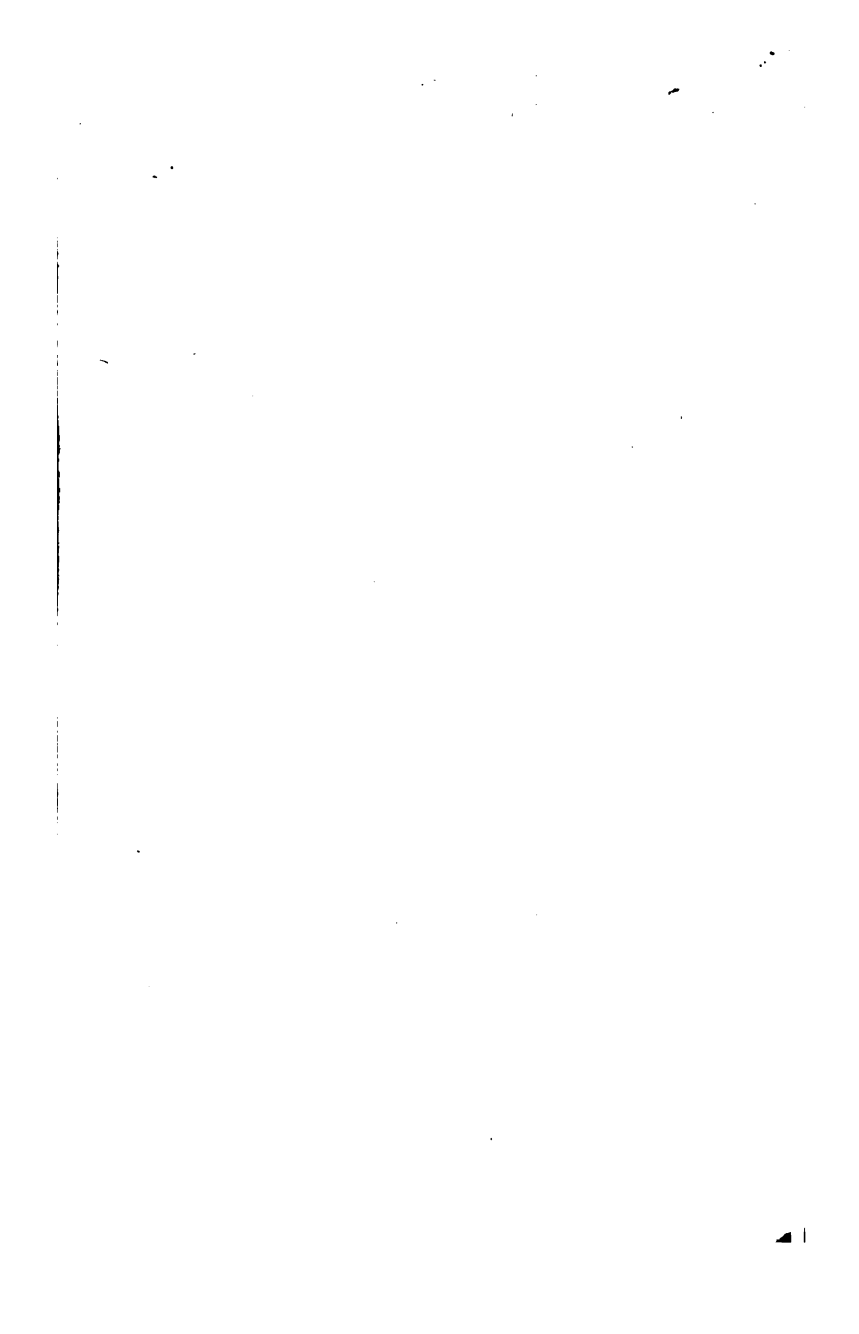
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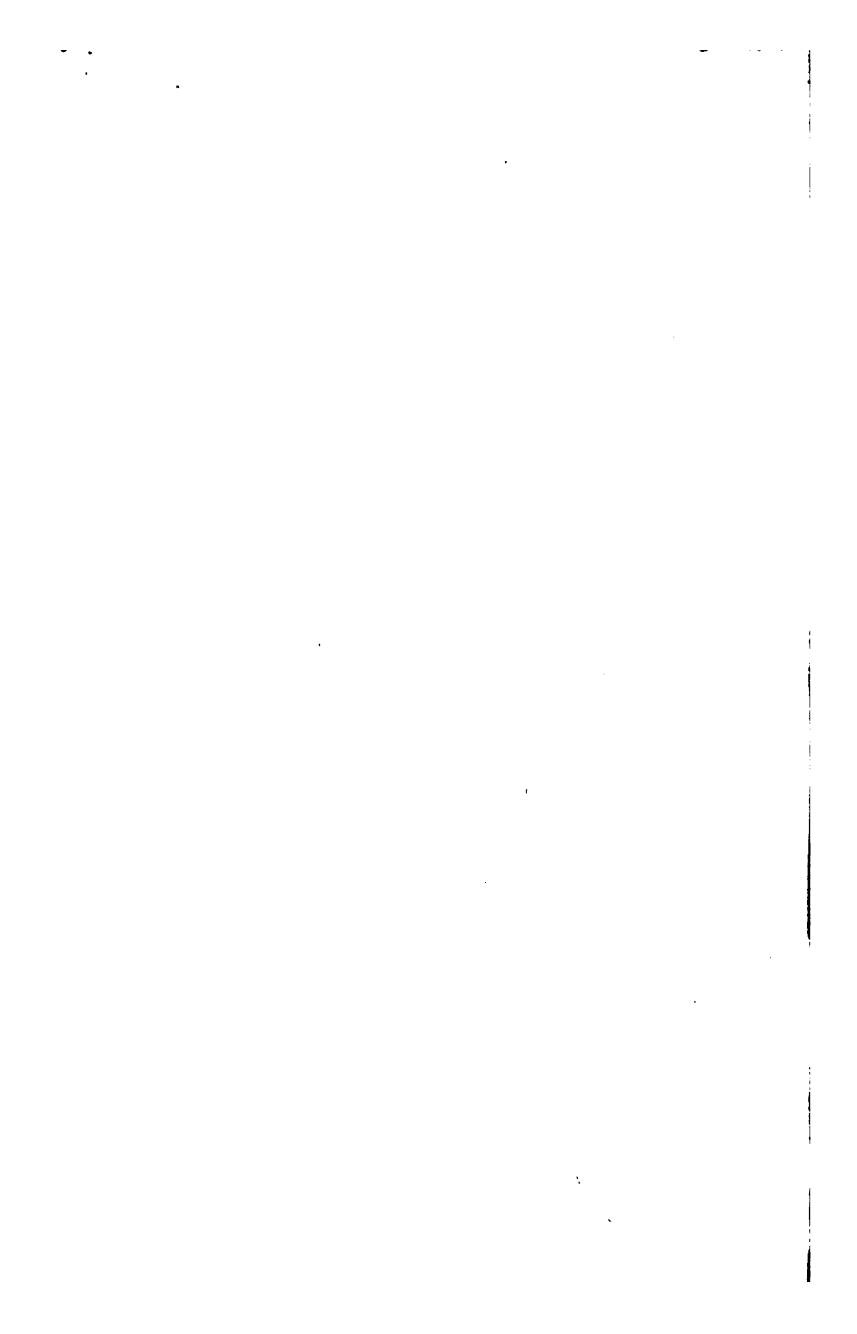
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